

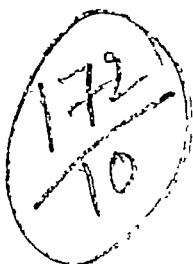
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CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY

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EDITED BY
AMALENDU BOSE



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THE LINGUISTIC APPROACH AND THE TEACHING OF POETRY

S. K. DAS

I

Few literary critics would suggest that literature can be properly studied without due attention to its medium, language. Nor would many linguists justify the investigation of style in literature without guidance from those who devote themselves to the study of literature. But unfortunately there is not always a measure of agreement on both sides. The schism between language and literature has often marred English studies. Discord and tension sometimes manifest themselves and linguists and literary scholars often regard their province as a distinct discipline.¹ Until recently this dichotomy between language and literature did not exist. Scholars often collaborated in both branches and their mutuality of interest is reflected in the work of such scholars as George Saintsbury, R.W. Chambers and C.S. Lewis who were equally at home in philology and literary studies. Now the two provinces are separate disciplines and collaboration between them is wanting. This has been a source of continuous strife among the staff members belonging to language and literature departments. This may produce the impression that it was the development of modern descriptive linguistics into an autonomous discipline which was the cause of tension.

It is true that modern linguistics achieved a degree of autonomy by turning its back upon the historical and comparative preoccupations of traditional philology. It concentrated on the synchronic rather than the diachronic study of languages, on the structure rather than the history. In course of time the link between literary studies and linguistics became exceedingly tenuous and many linguists came to feel that they had more in common with the anthropologist or the social scientist than with the literary critic or the aesthetician. The cleavage widened and there were other influences at work. The decline of classical studies offered English literary studies the opportunity to instal itself as the new basis of education. Syllabuses were remodelled in Departments of English and it is possible for students today to follow courses in English literature without the necessity of studying language.²

Today in the context of an evergrowing need for efficient language teaching all over the world, linguists have become more and more involved in the study of contemporary English. They come to the task armed with fresh insights and new theories as well as formidable terminology. Their work in certain areas has brought about a confrontation of linguistic and literary studies. But it would be idle to blame linguists for an aggressive neocolonialism in academic matters or to blame literary studies for a kind of effete feudalism.

There are areas where the two disciplines overlap. One of these areas of overlap is the study of style. Here literature and linguistics can meet. The linguist, who dismisses cavalierly the sensitive intuitive response of a literary critic as being inaccessible to objective verification or as lacking in rigour, is not likely to contribute to the development of stylistic studies. Similarly the literary scholar's bohemian rejection of the linguistic mode will render his critical apparatus clearly inadequate. Fortunately, such thorough-going academic chauvinism is rare. Many of the modern linguists were trained in literary studies before they became acquainted with the theories and methods of descriptive linguistics. Enkvist, Spencer, Gregory and Fowler belong to this category. Familiarity with literary studies, philology and linguistics is a necessary prerequisite for anyone who wishes to undertake work in the field of style.⁸ Linguistics and literary criticism, to the extent that they are both concerned with explaining what and how a poem communicates, perform much the same task.

II

In Indian universities where English is an important foreign language there is an increasing awareness that neither the old syllabus in English which consisted of a judicious mixture of historical philology and literature nor the new syllabus which consists of literature alone is entirely satisfactory. For in neither case is the student given any systematic training in relating differences in the use of language to the social, technical, rhetorical or aesthetic functions. Such a student if he has a sound linguistic training may be able to describe in considerable detail the linguistic differences he observes in a variety of English texts, spoken or written.

Our students have only a very limited empirical knowledge of the restrictions imposed upon the uses of language appropriate to different circumstances and different functions. The English-speaking student brought up from childhood in an English language environment will have no difficulties in this respect. He learns empirically a great deal

about linguistic appropriateness in many different situations. Therefore, a knowledge of and the ability to apply the techniques of linguistic description to the study of style in a literary text may be considered to be a desirable advantage and a necessary skill for our students.

In our country in advanced foreign language teaching we are, as it should be, much preoccupied with literature. It is taken for granted that university students should read a large amount of poetry and prose in English. Many teachers feel obliged to give their students something more than the traditional commentaries on the materials that are used intensively in the classroom. Unfortunately, many teachers only succeed in producing critical parrots repeating set phrases and set responses. The students do so because they lack insight into the language; and I have seen teachers who are fairly widely read in English literature hesitating before adapting and applying their literary methods to a fundamentally different teaching situation. In these circumstances the linguistic approach may simplify matters and prove to be a very useful method in teaching literature. It might serve as a mode of criticism and in giving the student a sense of style. If the teacher can accurately pin-point at least some of the more important textual features that cause stylistic responses he may hope to add another method to our existing repertoire. Thus the linguistic approach to literature may be said to have a direct bearing on the foreign students' problems.

In foreign language teaching stylistic analysis can be conveniently approached in terms of two stages or levels. Enkvist calls them SL and SB.⁴ The linguistic description, inventory, and distributional as well as statistical analysis of stylistic features have been abbreviated as SL (stylo-linguistics) and the study of correlations between stylistic stimuli and the reader's response has been labelled as SB (stylobehaviouristics). It is important to remember that the problems of SL and SB are all part of the total meaning of the text. The tendency, however, in literary criticism has been always to fall back upon SB. In many cases it has led to a hypersensitive subjective evaluation, and such criticism has often been looked upon as a sort of transcendental skittle playing.

In SL various systems of linguistic description can be used. In principle however the system of description must be adequate for the analysis of all features that may possess stylistic significance. SL can most conveniently start from the study of a closed text strictly limited either by linguistic or extralinguistic criteria. SB can be approached either through the written work of critics or through the responses of one or several informants.⁵ But the responses set up as models for the language learner must be representative and their choice involves

extralinguistic considerations—the level of the students, the competence of the teacher and the aims of teaching. The aim of teaching is to make explicit the correlations between SL and SB and thus to make the students respond to specific stimuli described by SL in a manner determined by models found through SB. A talented and well-read teacher with a good command of the language has a built-in sense of SB. This enables him to proceed from SB to SL by seeking out, defining and describing the stimuli that provoked his responses. Nevertheless it is sometimes desirable to set up methods for SL that are as independent as possible from SB. This becomes imperative in all rigorous linguistic analysis of style where SB is lacking. This has been competently done by Alex Rodger in his stylistic analysis of an anonymous early English lyric.⁶

III

Literature is evidently analysable. This is a presupposition of much modern criticism. William Empson, Cleanth Brooks and Donald Davie are critics with a range of linguistic interest, however, impressionistic their techniques may be. Their practical criticism involves a minute scrutiny of the verbal organisation in works of literature. Modern descriptive linguistics may be said to be a natural companion to modern literary criticism, because both are text centred, both involve analysis and close reading and both aim at accuracy of description.

Linguistics naturally begins with 'What is there in the poem'.⁷ It is a pity that we possess a few models of linguistic analysis of poetry.⁸ G.N. Leech's book *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry* offers us much valuable 'linguistic criticism'.⁹ But it is rather disappointing that Leech has not provided a more sustained model of analysis than his concentration on fragment allows. The absence of a more comprehensive treatise on stylistic studies in poetry or literature is a serious handicap for the student of literature.

Besides, many of us have antipathies to mere form and to formal description of poetry. This is evident in the following passage from I.A. Richards :

The trick of judging the whole by the detail, instead of the other way about, of mistaking the means for the end, the technique for the value, is in fact the most successful of the snares which waylay the critic. We pay attention to externals when we do not know what else to do with a poem.¹⁰

The stricture is puzzling for it suggests that we have in mind a too simple dichotomy between form and meaning, expression and content.

Richards's 'technique and value' is a rather misleading definition of the aim of the critic. The analysis of form unless it leads to meaning or value is a futile endeavour and I think no sensible linguist will so stubbornly cling to mere form. Mechanical formal description deserves the contempt it gets specially when it attributes value exclusively to technical virtuosity. The linguistic approach believes that formal description not only leads to but *is* a statement of meaning.¹¹ Yet there is a lurking suspicion behind every attempt at formal description. The charge that is ordinarily levelled against such attempts is that they are neglecting the evaluative for the technical part of literary study. Therefore, it should make the teacher who employs the technique of linguistics more careful while analysing the verbal organization of a poem.

If it is accepted for the sake of argument that verbal analysis should be conducted with a due regard for 'value', just how technical should the teacher of poetry allow it to be? Are precision, detail and completeness of formal description desirable ideals? Wellek complains of a deplorable gulf between linguistics and criticism.¹² Happily the gulf is becoming narrower.¹³ Halliday's condemnation of linguistic stylistics as tainted by a 'preformulated literary thesis'¹⁴ is no longer considered to be a necessary injunction.

IV

In teaching poetry the techniques of linguistic description should probably be kept largely out of sight. But the teacher may employ, if necessary, a linguistic approach that is not incompatible with the methods of traditional literary criticism. His aim will be to stimulate reading habits and to form opinions which achieve a just balance between response and analysis. If the teacher uses certain terms like 'sentence', 'clause', 'groups', 'phoneme' and 'lexical item' his students may not be shocked and they may not suspect that anything as scientific or as 'inhuman' as linguistics is in the air. In order to be a successful teacher he must be first a linguist and then become less of a linguist. His enquiry should be: What is the place of objective formal description in literary studies? Both completeness and revealingness should be the ideals of linguistic criticism. The meaning of a poem is more than the sum of its cognitive and formal meanings and perhaps some of the causes of this meaning are inaccessible to linguistic description. This statement, I hope, will not be resented by linguists as an attempt to introduce impurities into their pure discipline. Linguistic description must be purposeful in order to be useful. The crucial point is that linguistic study is essentially unselective and in it all linguistic features receive

equal attention. There is no harm in doing this ; but one must know why one is undertaking a verbal analysis. 'A preformulated literary thesis' may be useful in a very real way ; and to begin with a thesis is not to become a renegade.

With these provisos I shall pass on to the analysis of a poem and my analysis will illustrate some of the observations made above. In the commentary on the poem's grammatical, lexical and phonological aspects I have allowed interpretation to insinuate itself into description ; and I have not attempted to be a purist in matters of linguistic description.

I have chosen a wellknown poem *A Slumber did my spirit seal* for analysis. But before I proceed let me quote here two specimens of conventional criticism. The first passage is from Raleigh :

The poem is almost superhuman in its power of control, where each of the short sentence is half a tragedy...It is impossible to speak of such a poem as this...and here is a unique feat of strength, the achievement of a lifetime.¹⁵

The intuitive response is perhaps right but there is no analysis of the verbal organization to demonstrate 'its power of control'. The criticism seems to have been damaged by the romanticism of his critical stance and it demands from the student of poetry a feeble-minded reverence and a belief in the self-sufficiency of the impressionistic method. The second passage is from R. O. C. Winkler :

The emotional force generated by this poem depends upon the apparent similarity, but profound disparity, between the two stanzas. The first creates a sense of security and reassurance by its quiet, even, almost soporific, movement. But the figurative language used gives this sense a trance-like unreality. The second stanza proceeds in the same quiet, even tone, but saying things which imply the total destruction of the dream-world created by the first.¹⁶

This is a more sophisticated response than Raleigh's ; but here too, the preoccupation is with the effect on the reader. It depends on generalization and is unsupported by linguistic evidence. The writer seems to enjoin a belief in the statements made, elevating criticism to the level of theology, a form of literary Calvinism that is useless for the purposes of a teacher. Now let us turn to the poem :

A slumber did my spirit seal ;

I had no human fears :

She seemed a thing that could not feel

The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force ;
 She neither hears nor sees ;
 Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
 With rocks, and stones, and trees.

A poem is the result of verbal organization. A complete analysis cannot be given : Perhaps it is impossible and no one can pretend to be complete. The paraphrasable content, if one cares to extract it, is explicit and not of any very great significance. To the speaker the girl seems to have been immune to death, but she has died and she is now a part of nature. What is left for us to admire ? It is neither the cleverness of the form nor the novelty. It contains no magnetic properties of language. Therefore one should examine the linguistic features that add to the meaning in a more tightly packed manner than we expect normally.

In this paper the accent will be on grammar ; there is little to say about the vocabulary of such a short text. The phonology and orthography are also largely ignored for reasons of space and simplicity. This article is not a suitable place for an exposition of the grammar which I am using. I hope the terms, supported by examples, will be self-explanatory. I have employed the grammatical categories of Halliday.

Table 1
Sentence-Structure & Clause-Structure

Clause Structure	Line No.	Text	Clause Class	Sentence Structure & No.
SPC—P	1	A slumber did my spirit seal ;	a	aaa 1
SPC	2	I had no human fears :	a	
SPC	3	She seemed a thing that could not feel	a	
[SPC]	4	The touch of earthly years.		aa 2
CPSA—C	5	No motion has she now, no force ;	a-a	
S & P & P	6	She neither hears nor sees ;	a	
[PAA]	7	Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,		
	8	With rocks, and stones, and trees.		

Despite the formidable appearance of the table, it demonstrates the simplicity of the sentence-and the clause-structure of the poem. The

poem consists of two sentences, each stanza having one. The lines have eight and six syllables alternately, a very regular pattern. Sentences are about the same length, four lines long. There is complete congruence, then, between sentence and stanza, since each sentence ends a stanza. In the structure of the sentences we generally recognize two elements : a *free* clause and a bound clause. All the clauses are free and there are three such clauses in the first stanza and two in the second. They are very simple and pretty unremarkable. One measure of the complexity of the sentence-structure in any text is the number of *rank-shifted* clauses. In this poem only the last two lines of each stanza are complicated by a rank-shift, and the other clauses are connected by the simplest means.

If we analyse the structure of the clauses we recognize four primary elements of clause structure : the Subject (S), predicator (P), complement (C) and adjunct (A). The subject and complement are usually nominal groups and adjuncts adverbial groups. The pattern of the clause-structure (in Table I) in the first stanza has been broken and reversed in the second. This is perhaps a significant formal item in making real to us the 'intention' of the poet, the obvious contrast between the two states.

We may now consider the structure at the next rank below clause, the *group*, the unit out of which clauses are made. It may consist of one or more words and groups have a direct relation to elements of clause structure. There are three kinds of groups—*nominal*, *verbal*, *adjunct* (adverbial).

Table 2
Verbal Groups & Adverbial Groups

Line No.	Verbal Groups	Translative	Intrans.	Modal	Non Modal	ADVERBIAL	
						Advl	Preposition
1	did seal	x			x		
2	had	x			x		
3	seemed		x		x		
4	could not feel	x					
5	has					now	
6	hears, sees		x	x	x	neither nor	
7							in...
8							with...

The verbal groups are the simplest kind in this text, since nearly all the verbal groups in the first stanza are past-tense items and in the second they are all present-tense items. This is remarkable when one thinks of the enormous variety of choice available. With such a restricted selection the shift from the past to the present tense seems to be quite striking. The structural basis of the poem is clearly the contrast between the two verses. Stanza 1 deals with the past and there are no less than four verbs in the past tense—*did, had, seemed, could*. The girl had been such a vital person that the-possibility of her growing old or dying had not crossed the speaker's mind. Stanza 2 concerns the present. In addition to *now*, there are three main verbs in the present tense—*has, hears, sees*. The girl is dead. The seemingly invulnerable creature is now as lifeless and immobile as rocks and stones and trees. Adjuncts are very few in number and in the first stanza they are entirely absent. The main point is again their simplicity and contrastive behaviour.

The nominal groups are interesting. They are not even as complex as we are accustomed to meeting with quite frequently in normal conversation. Here is the table ;

Table 3
Nominal Groups

Line No.	Subject Position	Complement Position	Symbols used in Table Three
1	A slumber dh	my spirit dh	h = headword d = deictic e = epithet q = anything which come after the headword
2	I h	no human fears deh	
3	that h	a thing dh	
4		the touch of earthly dhq years	
5	she h	no motion eh	
6	she h	no force eh	

There are no numerals, and no nouns occurring pre-head (like *stone* in *stone-wall*). There is never more than one adjective, and not many of

these, and only in complement position. Three out of four are single pronouns.

If we turn to the lexical items now we find that the present text does have a lexical pattern. The three words *motion*, *force* and *diurnal* are all terms of physics ; the girl has become a part of the universe, a cosmic reality. I would, also draw attention to the repetition of the item *earth*. In the first stanza she seemed to be free from the passage of *earthly years* but in the second she must submit to *earth's diurnal course*. So far from escaping the touch of years she is now undergoing a daily contact with the earth. *Earth*, *earthly* and *human* also tie up beautifully. The choice of the lexical item *diurnal* which is the only trisyllabic item in the poem composed of mainly monosyllabic items (in fact there are forty-two monosyllabic and 6 disyllabic items) is also significant as a contrastive feature.

The foregoing analysis makes clear the formal contrast between the two stanzas and also points to a contrast between the two moods, the reassurance of the first stanza and the destruction of it in the second. Ultimately, however, these surface contrasts lead to a climax in the pantheistic utterance of the last two lines. How, then, is this surface contrast reconciled ? This may be said to have been achieved in five different ways : (a) There is the same inversion of word order in the first line of each stanza ; (b) It is the contribution of metre, the identity of its metrical pattern. The alternate lines have four and three stresses respectively and this is reinforced by rhyme—*seal feel* ; *fears years* ; *force course* ; *sees trees*. (c) The negatives are also a means of unifying the two stanzas. A tentative paraphrase of the first line may be 'I was *not* mentally awake'. The first six lines have no less than six negatives and all the clauses are essentially negative propositions until we reach the strong positive assertion of the last two lines. (d) The description of the girl as a mere *thing* (line 3) prepares the reader for a transition to the dead girl (stanza 2), who is passively *rolled*. (e) Finally a few phonological features should not be overlooked. The S sounds in line 1 are perhaps conventional and of no very great significance. But the predominance of r sounds is striking. There are no less than three initial r's and four medial r's in the last twelve words and these features provide a cohesive cement to the lines. Is it the implication of (a), (b), (c), (d) & (e) that the pantheistic universe is solidly one ?

I hope I shall be forgiven by the linguists for introducing interpretation into pure description, but I also hope that they need not forgive me for deriving interpretation from description. And although I have

described the formal aspects of the poem on three distinct levels, these distinctions have less significance than the scheme might suggest. We do not respond to a poem in three separate ways, nor do we know how these three separate levels operate. The poem as a formal unit is a composite in which the relationships between its components are more vital than the distinctions. For ordinary language we can talk about grammar, vocabulary and sounds at different levels. But the language of literature is more "highly structured"¹⁷ or has extra dimensions of meaning. In teaching, the teacher cannot hope to impart to his students this extra dimension of meaning, but he can explain the significant relationships, the organization, to extract value out of technique. The teacher must make an analysis of the literary text and then proceed to utilize his analysed fragments as elements in a synthesis. Stripped of its terminological ramifications the framework of linguistics may provide the student of literature with a useful tool, a practical critical apparatus. Linguistic study does provide ways of unfolding and discussing precise textual effects, and may be a means of assuring a sound factual basis for many sorts of critical judgment.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. See *Essays in Criticism*, XVI (1966), 457-63 ; XVII (1967), 322-47 ; XVIII (1968), 164-82.

2. F. R. Leavis and his associates in the thirties led the way. Leavis felt that humanistic education should be emancipated from its old associates, linguistics and philology.

3. I am in perfect agreement with Edward Stankiewicz when he writes: 'the student of poetry is in no position to describe and explain the nature of poetic language unless he takes into account the rules of language which determine its organization, just as the linguist cannot properly understand the forms of poetic expression unless he considers the forces of tradition and culture that affect the specific character of poetry'. "Linguistics and the Study of Poetic Language" in *Style in Language* ed. Thomas A. Sebeok, Technology Press of M. I. T. & John Wiley, New York, 1960, p. 81.

4. Nils Erik Enkvist & Spencer & Gregory *Linguistics and Style*, O. U. P., 1964, p. 47.

5. In "Criteria for Style Analysis" *Word*, XV, 1959, p. 165, Michael Riffaterre uses the term 'AR', 'average reader', for a group of informants.

6. Alex Rodger, "Linguistic Form and Literary Meaning" In *Applied Linguistics and the Teaching of English* ed. Hugh Fraser & W. R. O' Donnell, Longmans, 1969, pp. 176-216.

7. The phrase is taken from the first sentence of Winifred M. T. Nowotny's book, *The Language Poets Use*, London, 1962.

8. J. M. Sinclair, "Taking a Poem to Pieces" In *Essays on Style & Language*, ed. Roger Fowler, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1960, pp. 68-81 ; Alex Rodger In Fraser & O'Donnell, *op. cit.* pp. 176-216 ; A. A. Hill, "An Analysis of *The Windhover*: An Experiment in Structural Method", *PMLA*, LXX, 1955, pp. 968-78 ; Seymour Chatman, "Robert Frost's *Mowing*, An Enquiry into Prosodic Structure", *Kenyon Review*, XVIII, 1956 ; Roger Fowler, 'Linguistics and the Analysis of Poetry' in *Critical Survey*, III, 1967, 78-89, gives us an analysis of E. E. Cummings' poem "anyone lived in a pretty how town" ; J. M. Sinclair, "When Is a poem like a sunset ?" In *A Review of English Lit.*, VI, 1965, pp. 76-91. Besides these we have to mention the work of J. P. Thorne who has examined the role of Generative grammar in stylistics, *Journal of Linguistics*, I, 1965, 49-59.

9. G. N. Leech, *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry*, Longmans, London, 1969.

10. I. A. Richards, *Principles of Literary Criticism*, London, 1926, p. 24.

11. J. R. Firth, *Papers in Linguistics*, London, 1957, pp. 190-215.

12. Rene Wellek in Sebok, *op. cit.*, p. 411

13. Roger Fowler, *The Languages of Literature*, Routledge, London, 1971. See the last paragraph of his essay "Linguistics, Stylistics ; Criticism ?" p. 40.

14. Halliday, "The Linguistic Study of Literary Texts" in *The Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Linguists*, ed. Lunt, The Hague, 1964, p. 302.

15. Raleigh, *Wordsworth*, Edward Arnold, London, 1939, pp 111-12.

16. *Pelican Guide to English Lit.*, vol. V, Penguin, 1957, p. 165.

17. Nowotny, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

PERICLES : AN ASSESSMENT

BEDASRUTI DAS

Pericles, the much-neglected play of Shakespeare, deserves a significant place in the development of the poet-dramatist's philosophic vision. However, when we talk about Shakespeare's philosophic vision, we should not consider philosophy in terms of abstract theorisation. Mr. Rolf Soellner¹ has very clearly stated what the Renaissance humanists meant by the word, 'philosophy': "the humanists' use of the world (philosophy), as is reflected by Shakespeare, shows their practical concern with man, his destiny and place in the universe, his soul, and his emotions. For them, philosophy is primarily practical wisdom." Though drama remains the most objective form of literature, the great works are always marked by the artists' own involvement in them. After a close study of Shakespeare's plays, we can recognise in them "through all their diversity, a continuous personality." "A single mind and a single hand dominate them. They are the outcome of one man's critical reactions to life," writes E. K. Chambers.² Since Shakespeare's plays are the outcome of his critical reactions to life, attempts may be made to trace the development of his philosophic vision in his plays. So, *Pericles*, though not for its artistic brilliance as his tragedies, holds an important place in the growth of his vision of life.

Undoubtedly, for a period of time, rambling through the dark, gloomy atmosphere of the tragedies, Shakespeare got obsessed with them. For him, the human nature of jealousy and suspicion, disloyalty, base ambition, filial ingratitude and such like led to the creation of a nightmarish tragic world of cruelty and death. "The sadness and darkness in them (tragedies and dark comedies—*All's Well that Ends Well*, *Measure for Measure*, *Troilus and Cressida*) are.. in some degree at least, the expression of the author's own personal feelings", writes William Kennedy.³ Though, in the reunion of Lear and Cordelia in *King Lear*, temporarily a state of sublime joy and peaceful serenity prevails, it was shattered by the chaotic disaster in the end of the play.

To find an escape from this atmosphere and the horror of the tragic death, Shakespeare, in *Antony and Cleopatra*, idealises death. The heroic death of Antony does not leave in our mind the same tragic impression as the deaths of Othello, Hamlet, Macbeth or Lear. The

playful manner in which Cleopatra welcomes and embraces death shows her glamorous victory over death :

Give me my robe, put on my crown, I have
The juice of Egypt's grape shall moist this lip.
Yare, Yare, good Iras ; quick Methinks I hear
Antony call ; I see him rouse himself
To praise my noble act.

But Shakespeare, who passed through the tempestuous world of tragedy, does not seem to be content in this escape of the idealised, gilded, grand world of *Antony and Cleopatra*.

So, *Timon of Athens* comes as a sharp contrast to *Antony and Cleopatra*, with intense cynicism towards life. The cynical attitude of Timon, which is the result of the world's unjust, cruel treatment of him, pushes him into the isolated abyss of darkness of his own mind. The play was left unfinished probably because of Shakespeare's abhorrence of Timon-world, the darkest and the gloomiest he ever portrayed. His yearning to explore the brighter aspects of life leads him to *Pericles*.

But, the Pericles-world is not all happiness. Pericles suffers as intentionally Lear does. When Lear suffers greatly because of his lack of perception and swollen pride, there is no tragic flaw in Pericles which can justify his suffering. He becomes a victim of *circumstantial chances*. This comes close to our contemporary thinking—the idea of existentialism : we suffer for no reason (no matter whether we are virtuous or not), which is the essential irrationality of human existence. But *circumstantial chances* do not bring merely gloom to our life, they fill our life with gay and happy moments too. Just as the waves of the sea, they throw us in pits of gloom and suffering and raise us to the peak of harmonious joy and happiness.

To Elizabethans, the sea, the dominating image of the play, 'retained most of its primitive terror and peril'⁴ as well as it was the bed of 'unvalued jewels'. It is the sea which brings down Pericles to the state worse than the poor fishermen but offers Thaisa. It takes away Thaisa but gives birth to Marina. It snatches away Marina and throws her into the darkest region of society but reunites her with Pericles and Thaisa.

So we see the *circumstantial chances* become the most dominating force in the world of Pericles, which has been symbolically represented by the *sea*. Through sharp contrast of joys and sorrows, the course of life in *Pericles* ultimately ends up in perfect unison of harmonious joy, happiness and peace.

In tragedies, Shakespeare depicted an isolated world of the protagonists and a few other characters. The interest was solely concentrated

on their fate only. But in *Pericles*, we find that such a narrow barrier is broken, and there is a wider social consciousness in the play. Pericles forgets his individual suffering and responds humanely to the general plight of the people of the famine-struck Tharsus. The scene of the fishermen reveals the poor men's ways of life and thinking. And in the brothel scenes, it has been shown how the dormant basic goodness of the most morally degraded persons can be brought to the surface by the magic power of love.

The Chorus of Gower has a significant function in the play, though it is not a novel introduction in a Shakespearean play. Unlike the Greek Chorus, the Chorus in *Pericles* does not become an integral part of the play; he remains unaffected by the course of action. The Chorus appears as an observer and a narrator. As an observer, occasionally he makes comments on the actions of the play. More important his function is as a narrator. He narrates a part of the story to avoid unnecessary elaboration of the plot and to establish the link of the main pattern of the play. The dumb-shows, which are theatrically effective, serve the same purpose. But the most significant function of the Chorus is to bring us back to earthly reality from the abstract reality of the play, represented symbolically. This he successfully does by making us aware of the fact that we are mere observers of a stage play.

A detailed study of the play will help us enormously to explore the philosophic vision of the dramatist.

II

Pericles, in the opening scene, appears with the fiery spirit of a passionate lover of beauty. His reaction to Antiochus' daughter is more of adoration than true love. The comparison of Pericles with Hercules and Antiochus' daughter as the apple in the garden of Hesperus guarded by a dragon (- 'To taste the fruit of yon celestial tree') reminds us of Bassanio as a suitor of Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, where Bassanio was compared to Jason and Portia the golden fleece. In both cases, the purple passages used by the suitors reflect the grandeur of love's beauty rather than the love's wealth of establishing the organic bond of human relationship. But when Bassanio needed assistance from Portia in the form of the song distinguishing between fancy and true love to explain the riddle of the inscriptious on the caskets, and there by choose the right casket, Pericles has the worldly wisdom to explain the riddle and see the vicious reality beneath the gorgeous appearance.

Shakespeare, having emerged out of the happy comedies, offered Bassanio his 'fortune' and 'bliss'. For him, after the right choice of the

casket, love's beauty blossomed into love's wealth of life. But Shakespeare, having passed through the dark, dreary and corrupted world of tragedy, offers Pericles love's disillusionment, love's perversity (incest).

At this point it is interesting to study to the contrast between Pericles' charity of vision and Lear's blindness, metaphorically speaking. Lear, in the opening scene, lacked perception to understand the truth behind the false, flattering and pompous words of his two daughters, to express their love for him. But unlike Lear, Pericles possesses the requisite wisdom to remain unaffected by the false, pompous words of Antiochus with the accompaniment of music, which is corruptedly used here as a deception to reality :

Music I

Bring in our daughter clothed like bride,
For the embracements even of Jove himself ;
At whose conception, till Lucina reign'd,
Nature this dowry gave ; to glad her presence,
To knit in her their best perfections.

(I, i, 6—12)

Pericles has the keen perception and intelligence to pierce through the apparent deception of the riddle and reach the bitter and vile truth of the incestuous relation of Antiochus and his daughter :

How courtesy would seem to cover sin,
When what is done is like an hypocrite,
The which is good in nothing but in sight.

(I, i, 122-124)

Pericles begins with the realisation of the limited significance of human existence, which comes to Lear after journeying through a bitter and painful experience of life. Pericles expresses the relevance of bearing constantly in mind the consciousness of death :

For death remember'd should be like a mirror,
Who tells us life's but breath, to trust it error.

(I, i, 46-47)

But he refuses to be trapped by the plot of murder and there by become an innocent victim of death. He could clearly foresee that to hide the sin of incest another sin is provoked—his murder :

"One sin, I know, another doth provoke ;
Murder's as near to lust as flame to stake."

(Act I Sc I 138—139)

He has the mature understanding of human nature ; he knows Antiochus will not let him rest in peace, after he knows of Pericles' correct interpretation of the riddle :

Since he's so great can make his will his act,
Will think me speaking ; though I swear to silence.

(I, II, 19-20)

Pericles unhesitatingly accepts Helicanus' view regarding the hollowness of the flattering words of the Lords ("They do abuse the king that flatter him, For flattery is the bellows blows up sin), which Lear painfully recognises in his madness ("They flattered me like a dog and told me I had the white hairs in my beard ere the black ones were there. To say "ay" and "no" to everything I said I "Ay" and "no" too was no good divinity.")

When Lear failed to accept the bitter truth and wise counsel of loyal Kent and banished him, Pericles can easily recognise the true loyalty of Helicanus and is prepared to accept the just criticism of him :

Sit down ; thou art no flatterer ;
I thank thee for't ; and heaven forbid
That kings should let their ears hear their faults hid !

(I, II, 60-62)

Unlike the heroes of Shakespeare's tragedies, Pericles has great concern and love for his subjects and he places the interest of his people much higher than his individual sorrows and sufferings. It is for this reason that he decides to leave his country to save his subjects from the wrath of Antiochus. (I, II, 25-34).

Accepting the loyal counsel of Helicanus, Pericles leaves for Tharsus, entrusting the care and responsibility of his subjects on the shoulders of Helicanus :

The care I had and have of subjects' good
On thee I lay, whose wisdom's strength can bear it.
I'll take thy word for faith, not ask thine oath ;
Who shuns not to break one will crack both.

(I, ii, 117-120)

Now, the scene is laid in Tharsus. The idea that the greater malady of general woe lessens the personal grief is reflected in the words of Cleon, when his country is severely struck by a famine :

My Dionyza, shall we rest us here,
And by relating tales of others' grief,
See 'twill teach us to forget our own ? (I, iv, 1-3)

There seems to be an echo of this idea in *King Lear* when Lear expresses his internal suffering to be much more overpowering than the physical suffering caused by the tortuous storm :

...when the greater malady is fix'd,
The lesser is scarce felt.

But here it remains the mere contrast of the nature of suffering of an individual whereas in *Pericles* the contrast is between the suffering of individuals, Cleon and Dionyza, and that of the common man. So, both in *Pericles* and *Cleon*, their concern for their subjects suggests the wider social consciousness in *Pericles*. In fact there is a greater extension of this consciousness in *Pericles*, whose generosity goes beyond his subjects, and he responds to the greater cry of humanity :

Nor come we to add sorrow to your tears,
But to relieve them of their heavy load ;
And there our ships, you happily may think
Are like the Trojan horse was stuff'd within
With bloody veins expecting overthrows,
Are stor'd with corn to make your needy bread,
And give them life whom hunger starv'd half dead.

(I, iv, 90-96)

Now the question arises : what is the outcome of such intelligence, such goodness, such perception and such worldly wisdom in *Pericles* ? He is forced to escape from his beloved subjects, his own dear land. In the succeeding course of actions we shall see that such worldly wisdom can at the most help one to escape the man-made trap of danger (as *Pericles* does of Antiochus' wrath), but can do nothing against the forces of nature or *circumstantial chances*. *Pericles* will suffer for no fault of his, for no lack of wisdom in him, but because of their national, irresistible and hostile forces of nature.

III

After peace is restored in Tharsus, the time comes for *Pericles* to take leave of Cleon, as he received information from Helicanus that Tharsus is not best 'longer for him to make his rest'. This quiet atmosphere is contrasted with the turbulence of the sea, *Pericles* being tossed from 'coast to coast' after the shipwreck. He becomes a plaything of wind and waters on the sea ('In that vast tennis-court, hath made the ball/ For them to play upon'), and is ultimately cast aside on the sea side of Pentapolis. But *Pericles* bears all afflictions calmly and patiently. Mr. J. M. S. Tompkins⁵ rightly says, "Of all Shakespeare's heroes *Pericles* is the most patient man".

Lear in the storm-scene, submitted to the nature with an agonising torment within. Nature was the re-creation of his own subjective mind :

Rumble thy bellyful ! Spit fire ! spout, rain !
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire are my daughters :
I tax you not, you elements, with unkindness ;

I never gave you kingdom, call'd you children,
You owe me no subscription : then let fall
Your horrible pleasure ; here I stand, *your slave*,
A poor, infirm, weak, and despis'd old man.

(III, ii, 14-20)

Whereas Pericles calmly submits to the natural forces with almost religious invocation, He solemnly accepts the human limitations against the mighty forces of nature :

Wind, rain and thunder, remember, earthly man
Is but a substance that must yield to you ;
And I, as fits my nature, do obey you.

(II, i, 2-4)

Now we see that the sea has brought Pericles to the lowest ebb of his life, 'bereft a prince of all his fortunes'. For him, there is 'nothing to think on but ensuing death'. But the suffering of Pericles at this stage is temporary. Shortly afterwards, he enjoys the warmth of human love and kindness of the simple fishermen.

At this stage it is interesting to study the ways and thinking of the fishermen, which have been observed by Pericles objectively. "The simple men are philosophical as well as sympathetic, and their humour shows a moralizing depth unknown to Shakespeare's earlier prose rustics", as rightly pointed out by Wilson Knight⁶. The fishermen draw images from the sea to express their ideas.

Though they feel pity and sympathy for others, they understand their own limitations :

...it griev'd my heart to hear what pitiful cries they made to us to help them, when, well-a-day, we could scarce help ourselves.

(II, i, 20-22)

They have the keen perception to recognise the animal instinct in rich men to feed themselves on exploitation !

I can compare our rich misers to nothing so fitly as to a whale :
a' plays and tumbles, driving the poor fry before him and at last devours them all at a mouthful.

(II, i, 28-31)

They wisely refer to such destructive tendencies in man which destroy the moral and religious order in society :

Such whales have I heard on a 'th' land, who never leave
lapping till they swallow'd the whole parish, church, steeple,
bells, and all.

(II, i, 32-34)

In their simple, straightforward mind, they think of bringing the reformation of such destructive tendencies from within, instead of putting any kind of external pressure :

When I had been in his belly, I would have kept such a jangling
of the bells, that he should never have left till he cast bells,
steeple, church and parish up again. (II, i, 40-43)

They have the practical worldly wisdom that in these days it is difficult
to gain anything without cunning :

.....here's nothing to be got now-a-days, unless thou can't
fish for't. (II, i, 60-70)

Shakespeare never before presented so vivid a picture of the life and
thinking of common men, which reflect his wider social consciousness.
This happens probably because the creative artist has come out from the
intense living of an isolated individualistic world and desires to share his
life with the larger community in harmony and peace.

However, the fishermen not only offer Pericles food and clothing,
they pave his way to enter into the Pentapolis-world of happiness and
gaiety ; they offer him his armour which was caught in their net. It is
interesting to note that it is the same sea, which brought about his plight
to Pericles, that offers the armour to him, a symbol of the key to his
approaching happiness. G. Wilson Knight⁷ has significantly pointed
out : "After the first shipwreck some fishermen have fortunately retrieved
Pericles' armour. This armour, by means of which he hopes to rebuild
his fortunes, Pericles describes as a 'jewel'."

That the Pentapolis-world abounds in peace and happiness is
reflected in the fishermen's attitude towards their king, Simonides :

".. he deserves so to be call'd good for his peaceable reign
and good government." (II, i, 100-107)

However, the fishermen equip Pericles suitably to present himself as
a suitor to Thaisa, the daughter of Simonides, on her birthday.
Shakespeare creates the Pentapolis-world with pomp and grandeur of
the mediæval era ; the world of chivalry and courtesy ; the world of
music, dance and love. The ceremonious appearance of the five knights
with their devices with the mottos—*Lux tua vita mihi* (Thy light is life to
me), *pius per dolcezza che per forza* (More by gentleness than by force),
Me pompae provexit apex (The crown of the triumph has led me on),
Qui me alit, me extinguit (Who feeds me extinguishes me) *Sic spectanda*
fides (Thus is faithfulness to be tried)—presents the grandeur of the
world of knights. But Simonides can rightly interpret the significance
of Pericles' device of presenting 'a wither'd branch, that's only green
at top' with the motto, *In hac spe vivo* (In this hope I live) t

From the dejected state wherein he is,
He hopes by you his fortunes yet may flourish.

(II, ii, 45-46)

The poor appearance of Pericles does not affect the judgement of Simonides :

Opinion's but a fool, that makes us scan
The outward habit by the inward man.

(II, ii, 55-56)

Thaisa also does not seem to be enamoured of the apparent grandeur of the other knights. She responds to such love, where she is needed, where she can discover the significance of her identity, to such love that will accelerate the growth of two souls through mutual recognition. She reciprocates Pericles' love. Soft music and dance follow to match the occasion. Pericles is put into the heart of the gay moments of his life. But he is ever aware of the transience of time and thus sounds prophetically :

I see that Time's the king of men ;
He's both their parent, and he is their grave,
And gives them what he will, not what they draves.

(II, iii, 45-47)

Proving himself worthy, Pericles receives the gift of Time—Thaisa.

But the happy moments of life do not last long for Pericles. The condition of Tyre necessitates his return to the land within six months. During his absence his kingdom flourishes under the able stewardship of his loyal lord Helicanus. Since the shipwreck, as no trace of Pericles could be found the people of Tyrus wanted to set the crown of Helicanus, which he gracefully refused. But the the mutinous reactions of the people has now forced him to accept the condition that, if Pericles does not return within six months, he will take the crown. So Pericles takes leave of Simonides, the Pentapolis-world, the world of peace, happiness and gaiety.

Once again, Pericles is on the sea, which breaks the harmony of his life. Unlike Lear, it is the external storm only which generates and infuriates the storm *within*. Pericles, for the first time seems to be suffering like a tragic hero for his intense involvement with life :

O, still

Thy deaf'ning, dreadful thunders ; gently quench
Thy nimble sulphurous flashes !

.....Thou stormest venomously ;

Wilt thou spit all thyself ? The seamen's whistle
Is as a whisper in the ears of death

Unheard.

(III, i, 4-10)

The sea takes away Thaisa and out comes the woe-begotten cry of Pericles ;

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O you gods
Why do you make us love your goodly gifts ;
And snatch them straight away ?

(III, i, 22-24)

But in his excruciating pangs of separation from Thaisa he is offered Marina :

Thou art the rudeliest welcome to this world
That e'er was prince's child.

(III, i, 30-31)

Pericles gains strength and courage for the love of his child :
Courage enough ! I do not fear the flaw ;
It hath done to me the worst. Yet for the love
Of this poor infant, this fresh-new *seafarer*
I would it would be quiet.

(III, i, 38-41)

The very use of the word 'Seafarer' for Marina is suggestive of her life being a journey of painful experience and ecstatic joy, as the waves of the sea.

According to the custom of the seamen, a dead body on a ship is an evil omen. So Pericles returns the 'jewel' (Thaisa) he received after the first shipwreck to the sea in a chest laden with heaps of material wealth ; 'spices', 'jewels', 'the satin coffer'.

Pericles lands on Tharsus and expresses his wish to leave the charge of Marina in the hands of Cleon and Dionyza. Cleon, with reverence and gratitude, recounts the past generosity of Pericles and willingly accepts the responsibility of bringing up Marina.

Dionyza's reaction is quite in harmony with this :

I have one myself,
Who shall not be more dear to my respect
Than yours, my lord.

(III, iii, 32-34)

But in course of action we shall see the ironical reversal of this attitude in Dionyza ; her envy will lead to the most savage and cruel treatment of Marina.

Meanwhile Thaisa is miraculously saved by Lord Cerimon, who is by nature a good and charitable man. He is content to have studied physic by which he renders service to his fellow human beings. No thirst of ambition or honour clouds his spirit of service and it is not merely his knowledge but all his means are employed to such service. The recognition of his service is explicitly stated by the second gentleman :

Your honour has through Ephesus pour'd forth
 Your charity, and hundreds call themselves
 Your creatures, who by you have been restor'd ;
 And not your knowledge, your personal pain, but even
 Your purse, still open, hath built Lord Cerimon
 Such strong renown as time shall never (raze)
 (III, ii, 43-48)

In the violent storm, the 'dangerous' sea returns the 'jewel' in the chest-Thaisa—to the world. Cerimon with the help of his knowledge of medicine and music, which is restorative of life, gives new life to Thaisa. One may question the credibility of this incident. But, if we look at it as a symbol, that is, the life of Thaisa as an offering of nature, the question of credibility does not arise. It is very interesting to note the first utterance of Thaisa. It seems as if she speaks from a distant dream-world and gradually comes closer to the real world through a state of self, family and social consciousness :

Where am I ? Where's my lord ? What world is this ?
 (Act III, ii, 107)

So Thaisa is in the safe custody of Cerimon and takes shelter in Diana's temple with a 'vestal livery'.

So we see how *circumstantial chances* play a vital role in the Pericles-world, by separating Pericles, Thaisa and Marina. They are left in their own isolated world and suffer in their own way.

IV

Now the play takes a significant turn. Pericles is brushed aside in the background. But he seems to be living in the life of his own flesh and blood—Marina. Marina has grown up and possesses enviable beauty and grace. Innocent and pure in heart, Marina has the vigorous strength of intelligence and virtues, but she is intensely aware of her miserable state :

Born in a tempest, when my mother died,
 This world to me is as a lasting storm,
 Whirling me from my friends. (IV, i, 18-20)

She is all the time haunted by the memories of her father.

Dionyza plots on the life of Marina, because of the sharp bite of envy ; Marina with all her fineries outshone her own daughter :

And though you call my cause unnatural,—
 You not your child well loving—yet I find
 It greets me as an enterprise of kindness
 Perform'd to your sole daughter. (IV, iii, 36-39)

Dionyza, with the deceptive appearance of her false sympathy and loving care, entreats Marina to go for a walk by sea-side with Leonine.

So once again, we see that the scene is laid by the sea-side suggestive of the sea's 'danger'. Marina reluctantly goes with Leonine.

When Leonine asks Marina to say her last prayers, she is puzzled and tries to reason out why she should be thus treated :

Why would she have me kill'd ?
 Now, as I can remember, by my troth,
 I never did her hurt in all my life.
 I never spake bad word, nor did ill turn
 To any living creature ; believe me la,
 I never kill'd a mouse, nor hurt a fly ;
 I trod upon a worm against my will,
 But I wept for't. How have I offended,
 Wherein my death might yeld her any profit,
 Or my life imply her any danger ?

(IV, i, 79-81)

Such is the gentle and innocent nature of Marina. But no sweet pleadings could touch the irrational villainy of Leonine. (Act IV Sc I 85-90).

But the Intervention of the *sea-pirates* saves Marina's life now but they throw her into the darkest region of society—the brothel. Shakespeare, in the brothel-scenes, picks up the most corrupt and degraded section of society and shows how that can be transformed by the magic power of love and virtue. The miraculous transformation of the brothel atmosphere symbolically represents how goodness can act successfully within an evil structure. Marina's love is not restricted within the definite bounds of parental, conjugal or friendly love, but it extends to the point of embracing the whole of mankind.

Shakespeare, with his masterly strokes of artistic brilliance creates a vivid picture of the grim world of the brothel. The naked exposition of prostitution is made by minute details. The gross, vulgar reality of this world is reflected in the following lines :

Yes, indeed shall you, and taste gentlemen of all fashions. You shall fare well ; you shall have the difference of all complexions.
 (IV, ii, 74-76).

The following is the grotesque and perverted reality presented to a helpless girl like Marina :

If it please the gods to defend you by men, then men must comfort you, men must feed you, men stir you up.

(IV, ii, 87-89)

The primitive, savage sensuality in man comes on the surface. Boul't's description of the beauty of Marina brings out the beastly lechery of a Spaniard :

There was a Spaniard's mouth water'd and he went to bed
to her very description. (IV, ii, 97-99)

But Marina is firmly determined to remain unaffected by the evil intention of Bawd and Boul't and maintain her virginity :

If fires be hot, knives sharp, or waters deep,
Untied I still my virgin knot will keep.

(IV, ii, 145-146)

The vital spirit of goodness and virtue in Marina impregnates into the heart of the gentlemen and their attitude to life changes :

2. Gent. No, no. Come, I am for no more bawdy-houses.
Shall's go hear the vestals sing ?

1. Gent. I'll do anything now that is virtuous ; but I am
Out of the road of rutting for ever. (IV, v, 6-9)

Bawd realizes the danger of Marina's magic power of love and virtue as a threat to their profession :

...she's able to freeze the god Priapus, and undo a whole generation
.....she would make a puritan of the devil, if he would cheapen a kiss
of her. (IV, vi, 3-10)

So Marina is handed over to Lysimachus, Governor of Mytilene to defile her virginity. But she attempts to transform his lusty nature by reminding him of his honour and persuading him to maintain his honourable position :

If you were born to honour, show it now ;
If put upon you, make the judgement good
That thought you worthy of it. (IV, vi, 91-93)

She describes the vile atmosphere of the brothel, where 'diseases have been sold dearer than physic'. Lysimachus' corrupt mind is changed by Marina's gentility and sweet advocacy of virtue :

Had I brought hither a corrupted mind,
Thy speech had alter'd it.
(IV, vi, 103-104)

He addresses Marina as virtue incarnate :
Then art a piece of virtue. (IV, vi, 111)

Seeing Lysimachus as a Marina's convert, Bawd grows desperate and asks Boul't in a gross and vulgar manner to treat Marina :

Boul't, take her away ; use her at thy pleasure,
Crack the glass of her virginity, and make the rest mellable.
(IV, vi, 141-143)

But Marina with her sharp and penetrating insight reveals before Boulton the most disgraceful state of his life, and opens his eyes (Act IV Sc VI 160-168).

Ultimately, Marina's powerful virtuous instincts and humane attitude totally change the very atmosphere of the most degraded section of society—the brothel. She expresses her desire to employ her innocent skills to offer financial support to her present master :

Proclaim that I can sing, weave, sew, and dance,
With other virtues, which I'll keep from boast ;
And will undertake all these to teach.
I doubt not but this populous city will
Yield many scholars.

(IV, vi, 181-186)

Marina's achievement is symbolical of the very fact that genuine love for humanity is capable of generating such power of goodness that it can act successfully even in the vilest atmosphere.

Meanwhile Pericles comes to Tharsus to take back Marina, the only joy of his life. But he leaves the land in dumb distress hearing about the death of his dear daughter. The villainous act of Dionyza lies hidden under the apparent mask of pretentious sorrow ; she has raised a memorial for Marina. So the partial harmony achieved by Marina is distinctly contrasted by the intense grief of Pericles.

V

The harmonious reunion of Pericles and Marina is almost as exquisite as that of Lear and Cordelia. The symbolical significance of the sea is clearly brought out as we see the reunion taking place in a ship on the sea ; It is *circumstantial chances* which bring Pericles to Mytilene.

When the torrential outpouring of words was the mode of expression of Lear's sufferings, it is silence which becomes the exquisite state of the patient Pericles' intense grief :

Our vessel is of Tyre, in it the king ;
A man who for this three months hath not spoken
To anyone, nor take sustenance
But to prorogue his grief.

(V, i, 23-26)

Lysimachus brings Marina before Pericles to restore the peace of his mind. But the sweet voice of Marina fails in its mission :

Lys. Mark'd he your music ?
Mar. No, nor look'd on us.

(V, i, 80)

Marina, then, tries to reach the heart of Pericles by expressing her own sufferings :

I am a maid,
My lord that ne'er before invited eyes,
But have been gaz'd on like a comet ; she speaks,
My lord, that, may be, hath endur'd grief
Might equal yours, if both were justly weigh'd.

(V, i, 84-88)

Pericles, thus, responds when he hears someone suffered as much as he did ; but at the same time a flicker of hope suddenly sparked off in him :

My fortunes—parentage—good parentage—
To equal mine—was it not thus ? What say you ?

(V, i, 97-98)

Pericles wakes up from his reverie. The striking resemblance between Thaisa and Marina overwhelms him to spontaneous speech, which partially releases him of his grief. The suffering Pericles exclaims to believe in the words of the suffering maid :

Falseness cannot come from thee, for thou look'st
Modest as justice, and then seem'st a palace
For the crown'd Truth to dwell in.

(V, i, 120-122)

Pericles entreats Marina to tell the story of her life and thereby see how others endure sufferings ; as compared to his reactions :

Tell thy story ;
If thine consider'd prove the thousandth part
Of my endurance, thou art a man, and I
Have suffered like a girl ; yet then dost look
Like Patience gazing on king's graves, and smiling
Extremity out of act.

(V, i, 134-139)

On hearing the very name—Marina—Pericles is sharply stung :

O, I am mock'd,
And thou by some incensed god sent hither
To make the world to laugh at me.

(V, i, 142-144)

Lear also reacted with similar intensity of feeling :

Pray do not mock me :
I am a very foolish, fond, old man.

...
For, as I am a man, I think this lady
To be my child Cordelia.

(IV, VII, 59-70)

Let us note the contrasting features of Lear's and Pericles' consideration of Cordelia and Marina as a spirit,

Lear utters :

You are a spirit, I know ; where did you die ?

Pericles exclaims :

But are you flesh and blood ?
Have you a working pulse, and *are no fairy*
Motion ? Well, speak on. *Where were you born,*
And wherefore call'd Marina ?

(V, i, 152-155)

Here, Lear is haunted with the idea of death (*where did you die ?*)
Whereas Pericles looks forward to a new life (*Where were you born ?*)

Pericles' restrained feeling of joy is superbly expressed in the following words :

This is the rarest dream that e'er dull'd sleep
Did mock sad fools withal.

(V, i, 161-162)

Marina almost completely satisfies Pericles of her identity. The sea of ecstatic joy explodes at the very depth of his soul and gushes forth in torrents of words :

O Helicanus, strike me, honour'd sir !
Give me a gash, put me to present pain,
Lest this great *sea of joy* rushing upon me
O'erbear the shores of my mortality
And drown me with their sweetness. O, come hither,
Thou that beget'st him that did thee beget ;
Thou that wast born at sea, buried at Tharsus,
And found at sea again.

(V, i, 190-197)

The symbolical significance of the sea is distinctly manifested in the speech.

Marina brings back the juvenile spirit in Pericles. The passion to start a new life returns in him :

"Give me fresh garments". (V, i, 213)

But the turbulent waves of joy subside. The calmness of the music of the spheres descends upon him. He sleeps. In his dreamworld appears the vision of Diana, who directs him to yet greater joy of his life—to Thaisa.

We are brought to the Temple of Diana at Ephesus. The peaceful serenity of the temple atmosphere is perfectly suited to the universal harmony to be established in the reunion of Pericles, Thaisa and

Marina. In the present state of heavenly bliss Pericles considers his 'past miseries' mere sports of *circumstantial chances* :

You gods, your present kindness
Makes my past miseries sports, you shall do well
That on the touching of her lips I may
Melt and no more be seen. O come, be buried
A second time within these arms.

(V, iii 40-44)

Marina's words, like a wave in the sea, dissolve in Pericles' words :

My heart
Leaps to be gone into my mother's bosom.

(V, iii, 44-45)

It is interesting to observe the intertwining of the last line of Pericles and the first line of Marina to make the iambic pentameter line of the blank verse complete.

The raptures of joy and happiness drown the Pericles-world and the marriage-prospect of Lysinachus and Marina opens a new vista of establishing a brave new world.

VI

After a close, critical analysis of the play we may unhesitatingly deduce that *Pericles* is, indeed, a significant step to the maturity of Shakespeare's philosophic vision. The harmonious joy in *Pericles* is not like the undiluted joy of youthful exuberance in the idyllic world of his happy comedies ; rather, it gains density because of its emergence out of the artist's voyage through the painful experience of the grim world of tragedies. The realization of the vital truths of the world, at the beginning of their sojourn of life, places Pericles and Marina at a superior position than the heroes and heroines of tragedies. It appears from the study of the play that the protagonists could maintain a considerable detachment from their courses of life and observe them with a certain degree of objectivity. Such a mature perspective of life helps them greatly to accept the conditions of life patiently and thereby lessen their sufferings.

Another striking feature of the play, which marks a distinct development in Shakespeare's vision of life, is that, unlike in tragedies, personal grief does not bog down the spirit of the protagonists. They are patient. The wish of death does not haunt their mind. Rather, they prefer to fulfil individual responsibility as a member of the large community of mankind ; Pericles extends his generous offer to Tharsus ; Marina renders her services to the welfare of the people of Mytilene. Such an

awareness of the individual's role in society and the protagonist's active participation in it is quite alien to Shakespeare in his days of tragedies. But still Pericles could not completely rise above his condition. The only innocent flaw in his character, that is, his intense involvement with life, made him suffer like a tragic hero in certain circumstances; the loss of Thaisa led him to the agonizing state of his mind and that of Marina to dumbness of spirit.

The play also suggests that mere wisdom cannot bring all happiness to life. In course of the analysis of the play, it has been made clear how the characters prove themselves to be utterly helpless against the force of *circumstantial chances*. But there is no gnawing agony in the protagonists because of any sense of individual guilt as it is the case in most tragic heroes—Othello, Macbeth or Lear.

However, we may rightly conclude that the play is the starting point of a new phase of Shakespeare's philosophic vision.

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DEISM AND THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ENLIGHTENMENT

AMBARNATH CHATTERJEE

It is not possible to understand the true character of 18th century 'enlightenment' without understanding deism and its significance. The twin movements of deism and moral philosophy provide the very base of 18th century liberal thought.

I

The concept of deism, and its growth

Deism has been defined as 'natural religion', as opposed to revealed religion. Deism is the interpretation of Christian religion in the light of the so-called natural reason and individual conscience, rather than by Revelation and Scripture. Not Divinity, but morality is the foundation of religion, and that religion is natural religion. To Wollaston, religion is "nothing else but an obligation to do what ought not to be omitted, and to forbear what ought not to be done"¹, 'Natural' means 'rational,' or 'reasonable', that is, possessing the quality that distinguishes man from brutes.²

Deism has its roots in the Renaissance, in Renaissance humanism. It owes particularly to the Renaissance plea for tolerance. The plea for tolerance was not merely an intellectual or philosophical one, but it was dictated by humanistic considerations. It was a natural reaction to the tyranny of the orthodox and militant Church against 'heretics', and to the conflicts of the two Christian faiths, namely, the old Catholicism and the new Protestantism. In More's ideal commonwealth there are 'diverse kinds of religion'.³ Though one religion alone (More obviously means Christianity) is true, and would "at the last issue out and come to light",⁴ yet there is 'full liberty and choice' in faith guaranteed by King Utopus, who prohibits violence and religious conflicts.⁵ More, however, has faith in miracles, and in priesthood; but his priests are of "exceeding holiness, and therefore very few".⁶

Renaissance humanism, which suffered a setback in the Reformation, reappeared, in a way, in Cambridge Platonism in the 17th century. Following Hugo Grotius of Holland, the Cambridge school stood for reason and

humanity. Sympathy and universal love, not dogma, lead one to God. According to Whichcote, "Universal charity is a thing final in religion."⁷ Henry More stressed that the highest devotion comes from the 'noblest and most generous spirit'.⁸ While they accept the Scripture, the Cambridge Platonists oppose blind conformity and superstitious faith. Cambridge Platonism did not abjure faith: but by holding conduct above creed it helped in humanizing religion. It accelerated the tendency to define religion in moral terms.

A tendency appeared in the 17th century to examine faith by the light of reason and common sense, and not by the complicated formulae of theology. Locke's work—his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) as well as *Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695)—was of paramount importance in the enlistment of reason to the cause of faith. While he does not deny Revelation (as the deists do), Locke turns his back on theology and dogma. Revelation must be tested by reason, by the 'light within'⁹ us; for

God when He makes the prophet does not unmake the man ..
When he illuminates the mind with supernatural light, He does
not extinguish that which is nature.¹⁰

In his *Reasonableness of Christianity* Locke emphasized the original simplicity of the Christian religion, as against supernaturalism and the scholastic obscurities, which only made religion distant and difficult for the common man. The deists, coming soon after Locke, owe greatly to him for his insistence on natural reason in the understanding of religion, and for his repudiation of scholasticism. Pope followed Locke in the de-mystification of religion, which (religion)—Pope pointed out—"the good, untaught, will find"¹¹; such a one "will find", because he "looks thro' Nature, up to Nature's God" (*Essay on Man*, iv, 332). We have come close to deism.

Lord Herbert of Cherbury, elder brother of the Caroline poet George Herbert, is known as the father of deism. It was he who first formulated the five fundamental principles of deism in his *De Veritate* (1624), and later in his *De Religione Laici* (*Of a Layman's Religion*) (1645). The five principles are (i) belief in the Supreme Being and (ii) in His worship (iii) the practice of virtue as the chief form of divine worship, (iv) expiation of crime by penitence, and (v) reward and punishment after death¹². Lord Herbert's prime emphasis is on virtue, or practice of virtue, not on faith—"...by virtue is God so well worshipped that I have called that religion the best which is best squared to its rule"¹³. We are reminded of My Uncle Toby—

In the mean time we may depend upon it, Trim, for our comfort

said my Uncle Toby, that God Almighty is so good and just a governor of the world, that if we have but done our duties in it,—it will never be enquired into, whether we have done them in a red coat or a black one (*Tristram Shandy*. VI, 7).

II

The deistic position :

Towards the close of the 17th century John Toland took up the cause of deism in right earnest. In his *Christianity Not Mysterious* (1696) Toland applies Lock's dictum of judgement by reason—"Reason is the only foundation of *all certitude*"¹⁴. By reason Toland meant the natural faculty in man of 'forming various ideas or perceptions of things'¹⁵, of desiring the good and disliking the evil. He also called it 'Common Sense' or Reason in general.¹⁶ Toland goes beyond Locke in extending the claims of reason to Scriptural truths. If any doctrine of the Gospel be contrary to reason, or 'Common Sense', it should be rejected ; for we can have no idea about it, as we have no idea of a ball which is said to be 'white and black at once'¹⁷. And when we have no ideas about a thing, it is but "lost labour to us to trouble ourselves about it"¹⁸. Thus the Mysteries can no more give us the right idea about God than a prayer delivered in an unknown language can excite devotion in us¹⁹. Toland denies Scriptural Revelation, though he does not openly say so. A contradiction in nature cannot be righted even by Omnipotence.

The same emphasis on reason, or natural reason, is seen in Anthony Collins (*A Discourse of the Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion*, 1724). Free enquiry—Collins held—is not only the right means to religious truth, but has a larger humanistic and cultural significance. Collins ridiculed the belief in the literal fulfilment of the prophecies, which, according to him, have only an allegorical meaning (They are "fulfilled in a secondary, or typical, or mystical, or allegorical sense").²⁰ So Woolston, another eminent deist of the age, denies the literal truth of the Miracles, in his *Discourse on the Miracles of Our Saviour* (1728). The so-called Miracles of Jesus are, according to Woolston, absurd, and are no proof of His divine authority. To believe in the literal truth of the Miracles of Jesus is to "take him for a conjuror, a sorcerer and a wizard, rather than the Messiah and the Prophet of the Most High God."²¹ The Miracles, therefore, are to be interpreted morally, as showing the Saviour's unique greatness of power, goodness, kindness and love for humanity. In Tindal (*Christianity as Old as the Creation*, 1732) we note the same deistic repudiation of Scriptural authority and tradition, emphasis on reason and the natural faculty of man, and on

morality and duties. Tindal stresses the universality of religion. The God-given natural understanding within man ('Light of Nature')²³ "like that of the Sun, is universal", and would disperse all the 'mists and fogs' of false belief, unless man deliberately shuts his 'eyes of understanding'.²⁸

III

Free thought and moral philosophy :

Deism, or free thought, could not overthrow the distinctive Christian faith and the Established Church. Tradition dies hard. The Church of England had formidable champions, too, to defend it. Among them the most eminent and effective were Joseph Butler (*Analogy of Religion*, 1736) and William Warburton (*Divine Legation of Moses*, 1737-41). Bishop Butler sought to knock the bottom out of the deistic thesis, by suggesting that Christianity was but 'the republication of natural religion'.²⁴ Natural religion, far from being incompatible with the special Christian faith, is vindicated by it. Bishop Warburton equated deism to infidelity. "Morality is founded on Will",²⁵ that is, God's Will, or Scriptural Revelation, and does not grow of itself within the human mind.

Deism died as a movement against faith, but left its spirit in the moral philosophy of the age. The cardinal principles of deism—its repudiation of dogma, its humanistic or moral emphasis, its emphasis on duties as the true mode of Divine worship, its stress on individual conscience and on a basic inner principle within man himself rather than on the received law survived in the moral thought of the 18th century. The ethical aspect of deism considerably influenced the enlightened minds of the age, who put prime emphasis on humanity and valued religion chiefly as an aid to humanity. It may be noted that Addison, even as he holds to his faith and owes allegiance to 'our National Church', gives at the same time the pre-eminent place to 'morality, or natural religion', or what he calls 'the practical part of religion' (*Spectator*, 459). The character of Sir Roger's parson is distinguished by humanity. Fielding, who gently ridicules both the deistic view of philosopher Square and the religiosity of parson Thwackum (*Tom Jones*, III, 3), says elsewhere—

...a virtuous and good Turk or heathen are more acceptable in the sight of their Creator, than a vicious and wicked Christian, though his faith was as perfectly orthodox as St. Paul's himself.

(*Joseph Andrews*, I, 17)

One of Sterne's important sermons, that on Conscience, which he also incorporates in his *Tristram Shandy* (II, 17), closes with an exhortation to follow conscience and the Scripture alike—

God and reason made the law, and placed Conscience within you to determine,—not like an *Asiatic Cadi* according to the ebbs and flows of his own passions ;—but like a *British judge* in this land of liberty, who makes no new law,—but faithfully declares that law which he finds already written.

Voltaire, in tracing the greatest common factor in all religions, found it in God and uprightness.⁸⁶ Here Voltaire was voicing the enlightened opinion of his age.

Deism helped in diluting, if not completely overthrowing, the concept of Original Sins. Man's instinct and natural reason the deists held—lead to love and kindness. By upholding man's natural reason above the Scripture, deism reawakened the Renaissance faith in humanity and in the natural goodness of man. Even Bishop Butler held that the 'principle of benevolence' is 'natural' in man.⁸⁷ Moral philosophers, like Hutcheson, Hume, Adam Smith, and others, held that 'sympathy' is the most basic and natural instinct in man. It is an active universal principle, which works through the whole animal creation.

This led to a happy view of life. The deists conceived of happiness ('the consciousness of anything agreeable') as an inseparable ally of truth, as the 'end of society and laws : and as a divine dispensation.'⁸⁸ Religious liberalism in the 18th century discarded the gloomy view of religion for the cheerful. 'Good humour' was recommended by the moral philosophers as 'the best foundation of piety and true religion'.⁸⁹ Lord Shaftesbury refers to the saying of an ancient sage :

That humour was the only test of gravity, and gravity of humour. For a subject which would not bear raillery was suspicious ; and a jest which would not bear serious examination was certainly false wit.⁹⁰

Poet Thomson associates devotion with 'gladness' of heart. He refers to man as one

... .. who not from servile fear,
By rites for some weak tyrant incense fit,
The God of Love adores, but from a heart
Effusing gladness.⁹¹

We find Fielding, as well as Sterne, holding Roman Catholicism to ridicule, for its distrust of man's instincts, and recommendation of self-mortification. Faith in the philosophy of happiness is one of the distinctive marks of the 18th century 'enlightenment'. Epicurus had

emphasized the incorruptibility and blessedness of nature, and regarded happiness, or freedom from suffering or cares, as the end of virtue. Happiness and virtue are inseparable. The distinctive quality of the philosophy of happiness lies in its complete reliance on humanistic faith. It stresses the sanctity of human relationships, of universal fellowship and love. In the 18th century the old pagan concept of joy was wedded to the needs of the liberal religion, which glorified man and his existence on earth no less than his destiny in heaven. Sterne conceived religion in terms of an expansion of the human spirit in love and joy. One of the most beautiful scenes in his *Shandy* is that of the rustic dance and song, with which Tristram's travel account closes (*Tristram Shandy*, VII, 43). Here Tristram's sense experience is transmuted into a joy of spirit. His heart is warmed up by the rustic chorus into an awareness of cosmic kinship with creation.

Deism had fallen ; but the search for a moral order independent of any special or miraculous Revelation went on throughout the 18th century. The deists and the religious liberals of the age were right in holding that religion, if it is to serve humanity, must stand the test of free enquiry and righteous conduct. It must be an inner awakening in happiness, in love and reason, instead of resting on mere authority and dogma.

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A STUDY OF IMAGERY IN AUGUSTAN POETRY

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There have been some scholarly and illuminating studies in Eighteenth century poetry in recent years. Much has also been said on the treatment of imagery in this poetry. A study of the Augustan image-pattern may, nevertheless, be a welcome task as well as a rewarding experience. In Augustan poetry things are stated and suggested primarily on intellectual and moral levels. And for this manner of presentation imagery appears most suitable. The image as the vehicle of double meaning is important for the Augustan poet is fond of saying something the import of which he does not intend his reader to grasp immediately. Wit and imagery are synthesized in this way into an effective craftsmanship. This ingenious method helps the poet to enjoy the misunderstanding of the unwary reader.

It is evident that Augustan imagery rarely impresses us as rhetorical and pompous—qualities which we are accustomed to associate with the classical image. Nor does it aim at corresponding to the depth and immensity of human emotion which we observe in Romantic poetry. The poetic image has always been an essential ingredient of the poetic process and it is by means of the imagery that the wealth of human nature enters into Augustan poetry. Such images lend this poetry a meaningful relationship with human existence, scarcely to be found in English poetry, its metaphysical and modern areas excepted. A study in resemblance as well as in contrast between metaphysical and Augustan poetry will be a part of the present inquiry.

Imagery in Augustan poetry is obviously an integral component of the thought. The Augustan poets are interested in ideas and the versification of ideas. They use imagery congruous with the purpose and pattern of their poems—whether contemplative, satiric or mock-heroic. The Augustan image is, therefore, a necessary act of the mind exploring reality and ordering experience. In this sense it is functional and rational. The functional image points to a theme already defined, it rarely creates an idea. Pope, the leading Augustan poet, occasionally strikes out the poetic truth by the collusion of images as we observe in *The Essay on Man*. Probably the most useful method of considering Augustan imagery

is to understand the degree of harmony that exists between the image and the poetic situation that demands it. In this way the image helps the condensation of meaning which is an important feature of Augustan poetry. This mental activity is conveyed to the reader's understanding through what we may call concealed imagery—an interesting device which will receive due attention in this investigation. Stylistic patterns of imagery are not employed by Augustan poets and we do not propose to tread into this conventional field of imagery.

The most valuable image of Augustan poetry, in our view, is the metaphor of tone—obviously, the mock-heroic. By its means the poet locks together discordant and even opposite ideas and qualities in thematic reconciliation, without using any conventional imagery at all. Pope uses this delicate method in a logical and persuasive manner for making the large small and the small large in *The Rape of the Lock*, *An Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* and, particularly, *The Dunciad*. The pattern, power and flexibility of the mock-heroic metaphor will be adequately noticed in this study. Pope's alert reader is sure to respond with an astonishing delight to the three-dimensional image—the over-all, the local and the mock-heroic—which he discovers in his poetry. We shall be able to illustrate how this pattern is deftly used in Pope's poetic images.

Of all Augustan poets Alexander Pope knows most the art he practises and the creative principle that underlies it. The present investigation will be mainly focussed on his poetry for it represents the essence as well as summit of Augustan poetry. Pope's imagery is intellectually and physiologically integrated to the general development of his mind and art—it indicates the poetic evolution as well as the poetic structure. It turns the intellect and imagination of the reader in the intended direction so that his mental preparedness for an adequate realization of the poetic effect is reached. Imagery helps Pope in endowing abstract ideas with the welcome stamp of reality and forcing the reader into a responsible, appreciative response. Pope uses character images times without number to reflect the role they play in determining human nature and behaviour. Ideas like pride and malice, affectation and ill-nature, honour and judgment frequently appear in metaphorical guise in *The Rape of the Lock* and *The Dunciad*.

Pope's poetry has been called the poetry of statement, it states immensely, if we may use an expression of T. S. Eliot on Dryden. It is erroneous to think that there is a limited scope for imagery in this kind of poetry. It is also said that Pope writes poetry with close prose affinities and consequently, images have no particular role in shaping its

pattern or meaning. Matthew Arnold called Pope a great classic in English prose; the present study will suggest with relevant illustrations, that the finest prose qualities beneath the surface of Pope's poetry are created and sustained by metaphor. The prose argument of *the Essay on Man* is conveyed by the poetic image. Images of this species are rarely sensuous or imaginative, they are primarily acts of judgment.

Pope's poetry is intellectual, witty and definitive like much in Donne's poetry. It will be our endeavour to show that imagery helps the creation of Augustan poetic diction—its precision and antithesis—at different levels of intensity. Pope's principle of correctness must, of necessity, broaden out the particular into the general and there is yet no bar to the poet's fine spray of imagery in *The Rape of the Lock* and the Sporus passage in *An Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot*. The poet manages the sudden raising or lowering of the emotional temperature in the fight between the beaux and the belles in *The Rape of the Lock* and in registering his contempt for many foes and imperfect sympathy for some friends in his "Epistles and Satires" principally through the expert use of metaphor. There is no artist in English poetry more accomplished than Pope in the deliberate modulation from the major key into the minor and vice versa. Images are, therefore, necessary in obtaining the richness, interest and tensions of Augustan poetry. The metaphysical line of wit is observed in some of Pope's lyrical poems. Pope's image is sometimes powerfully compressed as in *Windsor Forest* and *Eloisia to Abelard*; he is fond of using a witty image when he wants to disvalue something, but his wit does not descend into conceit and in this respect there is a clean distinction between metaphysical and Augustan imagery although both are nourished by critical attitudes to life.

Some serious students of eighteenth century literature think that the heroic couplet, particularly the closed one, exercises a muting or subordinating influence on images. It is our suggestion that the closed couplet certainly modifies the structure of the Augustan image, but it does not disvalue or submerge it. Professor Maynard Mack has noticed some of Pope's "more reticent modes of imaging", which achieve metaphorical effect without using what it is customary to regard as metaphor. The most important of these devices is the use of proper names which helps the extraction of humorous qualities in all his major poems, particularly *The Iliad*, *The Dunciad* and the Epistles. Another favourite mode is evaluative allusion which diminishes as well as enlarges the material as we observe in the correspondence of Sporus to Satan and of Addison to the Turkish Sultan in *An Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot*. Some other recognized techniques are pun and juxtaposition,

irony and mock-heroic. These kinds of images are eminently suitable to the structure of the closed couplet. The elaboration and adequate documentation of these oft-used devices will form part of the present inquiry. Another versatile image—a favourite device of the poet—is observed in his human portraits and may be called extended metaphor. The portraits of Atticus, Sporus, Sappho, Narcissa are activated into life by the successful employment of this method. They define the entire tenor and structure of the poems in which they appear.

Pope's poetry is a world of law and logic. The imagery in this world has also its law and logic; it eases and complicates, widens and deepens our response to his poetry. Pope has no poetic necessity for sensuous word pictures. The sensuous quality of the insect and animal images in the Sporus passage is conceived and organized to create our moral repulsion to Lord Hervey's character. The images in his passage, and in many passages in *The Dunciad*, are modified and interrelated by the poet's passion. In *The Rape of the Lock* the poet uses images to turn ideas inside out, to demonstrate that there is no truth in them. Some images in *The Essay on Man* are amphibious—half of image, half of abstract meaning and yet they release in the reader a distinct emotion or passion. Pope seems to have anticipated in his poetic practice the sagacious statement of Yeats: "Wisdom speaks first in images." The intensity and tension of Pope's poetry, its evocative power and novelty of diction, its audacity and over-concentration of meaning—all these have coalesced into an artistic organism by the deft handling of the poet. This kind of image qualitatively differs from the method of the epic poet who draws our attention away from the context to the image by superimposing a detailed image over a simple action. Whenever Pope uses a classical image he tames and stylizes it to enable the reader to see the point in a clear and de-personalized perspective. This also explains why he does not use archetypal images which recur in the manner of ritual in epic poetry. If Belinda's cure of untamable passion by the 'medicine' brought by Umbriel from the under-world is considered a variation of the re-birth archetype, we immediately notice that it is cast in the mock-heroic mould and idiom.

The Augustan image-pattern is amply illustrated in the poems of Swift, Gay and Dr. Johnson. They do not use images separate from a context, nor do they construct a whole poem or passage as a composite image in the manner of Donne. Their images are strung together by a thread of logical argument and this mode is unmistakably Augustan. With Swift and Dr Johnson the image is an instrument of

moral good, with Gay it is often of subtle communication between the real and the ideal. The working principle behind their image-patterns is in conformity to the Augustan poetic tradition. The art of Swift is utilitarian, he does not construct images for the pleasure of his readers or his own. His images are, therefore, functional; clear, concise and directed to the immediate purpose. They are conceived in the intellect and executed in the common poetic idiom of his time. Swift imposes upon even a trifling episode the whole weight of his brooding upon human folly; hence his images constitute his response to the intellectual inadequacy and moral confusion of the modern world. In his poetry truth becomes operative through imagery, it satisfies the reader's yearning for order and completeness in the pattern of human existence, thinking and behaviour.

Gay's poems are formalized and polished in orthodox Augustan poetic diction although we observe a process of idealizing which is entirely his own. We observe a delicate and sophisticated craftsmanship in the constitution of his imagery which is genuinely Augustan, albeit somewhat devitalized. This is particularly noticeable in his poem "An Epistle to the Right Honourable William Pulteney." The delicate absurdity and sophisticated mockery of some images in "Rural Sport" are anaemic attempts in the tune of Pope's imagery in *The Rape of the Lock*. The images in "Trivia" indicate a half-mocking, half-serious vision which reflects the contrast between the artificial and the natural and this certainly is Gay's favourite poetic process.

Dr. Johnson thinks of poetry as a discipline rather than a delight. His images are, consequently, refined, powerful and static. His aggressive interest in human concerns explains the warm, human impulse behind many of his images. He manages to transform the sophisticated image material in "The Vanity of Human Wishes" into something more delicate and universal in "London". But in both poems the images help the poet give a proportionate emphasis on values. The criterion of Dr Johnson's image-construction is appropriateness, we observe his ceaseless vigilance over the equivalence between the theme and the imagery. His immense, impatient personality animates his images, it also explains occasional paradoxes in their texture. His sense of moral responsibility mutes many of his images into formal, stylized expressions, but they never alter the scale of relative values. The employment of Dr Johnson's imagery is not spectacular, it conforms honourably to the Augustan image pattern.

An examination of the nature and function of the image employed by minor Augustan poets like Prior, Akenside and Parnell will be a part

of the inquiry I propose to work on although we think that their poetic meaning is not concentrated in their imagery. A study of the relationship of Augustan imagery to the current poetic diction is essential to the understanding of the creative principle that underlies Augustan poetry and this aspect will receive proper attention in my proposed study. The image helps the Augustan poets to concentrate their meaning in fewer words, to combine words in a new way and thus create a poetic diction which by assent and pedigree is classical. Much of eighteenth century poetry will be more clearly understood in the light of a responsible examination of its imagery.

THOMAS GRAY : A STUDY IN LEUCHOCOLY OR WHITE MELANCHOLY

MAYA CHAKRAVARTY

Commenting on Gray's poetry Oswald Doughty observes, "In Gray's poetry disillusion is the key-note of the whole. The prevailing mood of a naturally brooding, introspective temperament, a mood, which was developed by the spiritual and material isolation of the poet, finds full and frequent expression in the verse."¹ Gray has fully projected his predicament in an age of disillusionment, through his verse. His alignment with the above spirit of the period was natural and spontaneous. Death played a havoc with his dear and near ones and left a deep scar on his heart, but it also inspired his earliest and his greatest song. In 1742, he sent an *Ode to Spring* to his friend West, but West died suddenly before the poem reached him. This ode, written before any hint of West's fate had reached the poet, is touched with the sombre colour and plaintive note of autumn. The poet, a lover of nature, surrounded by all the delights of spring in the woodlands, pursues a train of thought tinged with melancholy and disillusion.

Where'er the Oak's thick branches stretch
A broader browner shade ;
Where'er the rude and moss-grown beech
O'er canopies the glade,
Beside some water's rushy brink
With me the Muse shall sit, and think
(At ease reclin'd in rustic state)
How vain the ardour of the Crowd.
How long, how little are the Proud,
How indigent the Great !

Then the poet's thought takes a new turn as his eyes light on the insects humming and flying around in the sunlight. In the midst of beauty and pleasure, Gray contemplates the vain ardour of the people, and the mortality of human beings who are like the little insects of the spring season. The most vividly realized aspect of the spring is, somewhat oddly, the swarm of insects. And then we discover that this is because :

The Contemplation's sober eye
 Such is the race of Man ;
 And they that creep, and they that fly,
 Shall end where they began,
 Alike the Busy and the Gay
 But flutter thro' life's little day,
 In fortunes's varying colours drest ;
 Brush'd by the hand of rough Mischance,
 Or chill'd by age, their airy dance
 They leave, in dust to rest.

In *The Progress of Poesy*, the same sense of everpresent sorrow is apparent :

Man's feeble race what ills await,
 Labour, and Penury, the racks of Pain,
 Disease, and Sorrow's weeping train,
 And Death, sad refuge from the storms of Fate.

In his *Ode for Music*, the poet describes his sad, brooding temper in lines which borrow the grace of Milton :

Oft at the blush of dawn
 I trod your level lawn,
 Oft wood the gleam of Cynthia silver-bright
 In cloisters dim, far from the haunts of Folly,
 With Freedom by my Side, and soft-ey'd Melancholy.

'Melancholy' is personified here. It is the key-word in Gray's poetry and it was the constant companion of the poet. Commenting upon the word "Melancholy," Cleanth Brooks in his *Studies in the Structure of Poetry*, remarks, "Melancholy is something more than a disease, which rendered Gray unfit for the madding crowd's ignoble strife, Melancholy becomes thus a kind of wisdom which allows him to see through the vanities which delude the Proud."²

The source of Gray's melancholy is to be found partly in a constitutional languor of temperament and partly in the dark thoughts about a supra-human power that hurts life and makes it miserable. Secondly, he was susceptible to the religious sentiment and readily accepted the creed in which he was brought up. But his religious faith was confirmed by that awe-inspiring sense of divinity which forced itself on his mind during his journey to the Grande Chartreuse. His faith was not shaken by melancholy ; on the contrary, melancholy made him cling to it. He was always haunted by the idea of the brevity and insignificance of human life. When he watched his fellows absorbed in the world of business and pleasure, he was apt to remind himself that his own mode

of living was not much superior especially as he, unlike them, was not enjoying himself. Human beings are as ephemeral as the insects and as busy about nothing :

Methinks I hear an accents low
The sportive kind reply :
Poor moralist I and what art thou ?
A solitary fly I
Thy Joys no glittering female meets,
No hive hast thou of hoarded sweets,
No painted plumage to display :
On hasty wings thy youth is flown ;
Thy sun is set, thy spring is gone—
We frolick, while 'tis May.

This melancholy mood, a predominant mood of the poet, developed early. It began almost as a pleasing pastime of early life—the luxurious melancholy of dreaming youth. As he wrote to Richard West from Peterhouse, in December 1736 : “If the default of your spirits and nerves be nothing but the effect of the hyp, I have no more to say. We all must submit to that wayward queen ; I too in no small degree own her sway, I feel her influence while I speak power.”

“Low spirits are my true and faithful companion,” he wrote to West in 1737, in a characteristic vein of serious banter, “they get up with me, go to bed with me, make journeys and returns as I do : nay, pay visits, and will even affect to be jocose, and force a feeble laugh with me, but most commonly we sit alone together, and are the prettiest insipid company in the world.”

But this fashionable, pleasing, pensive melancholy of his youth deepened with the passing years into something darker, sterner, more terrifying. The change apparently took place in or about 1742, the time of Gray's most prolific poetic output³.

“Mine, you are to know,” the poet writes to West in May of this year, “is a white Melancholy, or rather Leucocholy for the most part ; which, though it seldom laughs, or dances, nor ever amounts to what one calls Joy or Pleasure. Yet it is a good easy sort of state. The only fault is its insipidity ; which is apt now and then to give a sort of Ennui.”

Ennui which includes a sense of emptiness, apathy, a sort of grey-ness of the spirit, prevented him from enjoying anything completely. His *Eton-Ode* records the fleeting pleasure of remembered happiness, set against a background of everpresent sorrow :

Ah happy hills, ah pleasing shade,
Ah fields belov'd in vain,
Where once my careless childhood stray'd,
A stranger yet to pain !

Till the thought of the poet darkens, foreseeing the evils that await youth in the hidden years :

Alas, regardless of their doom, the little victims play !
No sense have they of ills to come,
Nor care beyond to-day :

Pursuing this morbid train of thought the poet continues to describe in general terms the sad lot awaiting these unsuspecting victims and he concludes :

To each his suff'rings : all are men,
Condemn'd alike the groan
The tender for another's pain,
Th' unfeeling for his own.

In *Amatory Lines*, we find Gray's mood of melancholy in the midst of pleasure :

'Midst Beauty and Pleasure's gay triumphs, to languish
And droop without knowing the source of my anguish :
To start from short slumbers and look for the morning—
Yet close my dull eyes when I see it returning ;
Sighs sudden and frequent, looks ever dejected
Sounds that steal from my tongue, by no meaning connected !
Ah say, Fellow-swains, how these symptoms befell me ?
They smile, but reply not. Sure Delia will tell me !

In the midst of pleasure the poet finds pain, and behind pain, the tread of pleasure is distinctly audible,

Still, where rosy Pleasure, leads,
See a kindred Grief pursue ;
Behind the steps that Misery treads,
Approaching comfort view ;
The hues of Bliss more brightly glow,
Chastised by sabler tints of woe ;
And blended form, with artful strife,
The strength and harmony of Life.

In this way the poet, gazing across the fields to where the russet towers of Eton loomed faintly through the distance, moralizes on the contrast between his present state and that of the carefree days of boyhood.

In the *Hymn to Adversity*, Gray again articulates his pessimistic musings. He addresses adversity as,

Daughter of Jove, relentless Power,
 Thos Tamer of the human breast,
 Whose iron scourge and tort'ring hour,
 The Bad affright, afflict the Best !

Rich or poor, proud or humble alike, are victims of fate or pain :
 Bound in thy admantine chain.
 The Proud are taught to taste of pain,
 And purple Tyrants vainly groan
 With pangs unfelt before, unpitied and alone.

The strain of melancholy in Gray's temperament was intensified by the circumstances of his life. In 1742, at the very beginning of his career as a poet, the horror of death was brought home to him by the sudden decease of his friend, West. In the sonnet, written in the year of West's death, the poet enters upon that dusty road of sorrow which he was to tread for the remainder of his life.

Now as the beloved figure of West arose before his mental eye, his grief sighed itself forth in quiet, beautiful, tender lamentation. To the poet, the morning shines in vain ; he cannot enjoy the smiling morning or the reddening sun :

In vain to me the smiling Mornings shine,
 And reding Phoebus lifts his golden Fire :
 The Birds in vain their amorous Descant join ;
 Or chear Fields resume their green Attire.

The poet is a lonely creature and nobody weeps for the poet. He is forsaken and an outcast :

These Ears, alas ! for other Notes repine,
 A different object do these Eyes require.
 My lonely Anguish melts no Heart, but mine ;
 And in my Breast the imperfect Joys expire.

But other men of this world are happy and the morning is the source of delight to them :

Yet morning smiles the busy Race to chear,
 And new-born Pleasure brings to happier Men :
 The Fields to all their wonted Tribute bear ;
 To warm their little Loves the Birds complain :
 I fruitless mourn to him, that cannot hear,
 And weep the more because I weep in vain.

There are in this poem, for him who willingly would listen to them, the accents of real and poignant regret. The final verses might, indeed, be given wider significance than the poet intended, and be regarded as expressive of his own deepest poetic impulse.

Even here, however, his own melancholy finds expression, while he sings the woes of others. It was, surely of his own dark mood rather than of the death of Mrs. Clerks which had filled his mind when he wrote of the husband now left companionless. "What ails," asks the poet,

While yet he strays
Along the lonely vale of days ?

And he proceeds to answer his own question with that bitterness of despair, with that sense of life's shortness and of the emptiness of death that were ever present in his mind :

A pang, to secret sorrow dear ;
A sigh ; an unavailing tear ;
Till time shall every grief remove,
With life, with memory, and with love.

It was not for the death of any actual friend, however, that Gray's greatest dirge came to be written. The composition of the poem started in 1742 ; the death of West may, indeed, have played some part in its development, if not in its origin. But Gray stated that his famous *Elegy* was about no particular individual as Oswald Doughty puts it, "He lived in a world of abstract thought that was intensely real to him. His emotions came to him not so much from particulars persons as for general ideas, abstract musings, introspective questionings of his own."

And in the *Elegy*, he found, for once an almost perfect mode for expressing all the pent-up emotions which he had gradually absorbed from the world of shadows amidst which he lived. It was his supreme achievement because it admirably suited his own impulse of expression. In it the various currents of thought and emotion which continually swept through him, had full play.

Gray in the Autumn of 1742 was in very low spirits owing to a spate of misfortunes—the death of his father in September, 1741, the financial unwisdom of the father which recoiled upon the son, Gray's entrance into the university to take the degree of B.C.L. against his own wishes, in deference to those of his mother and aunts, his quarrel with Walpole, his loss of time abroad, and finally, the death of his friend, Richard West in June 1742. Mason connected the *Eton-Ode* and the *Hymn to Adversity* with Gray's grief on the death of Richard West. On this point subsequent critical opinion has adopted a sceptical attitude, as is to be found in the following remark : "He thus offers only a personal conjecture based upon the evidence that melancholy poem was begun at a melancholy time by a melancholy poet."

Yet it cannot be denied that Gray who was deeply susceptible to

sorrow, had his being rudely shaken to its very depth by the deaths of those whom he held dear to his heart. In this way, we find that the death of West was the major factor in the list of Gray's misfortunes. Two stanzas of the *Elegy* itself are indebted to West's epistle *Ad amicos* sent to Gray from Christ Church on July 4, 1737, after a severe illness :

From you remote, methinks, alone-I stand
Like some sad exile in a desert land ..
Few will lament my loss whene'er I die

which culminated in Odell Shepherd's positive identification of West as the "Youth to Fortune and to Fame Unkuown."

Gray's problem of personal loss, first expressed in the Sonnet and in the Latin Lines, is finally resolved in the *Elegy*. In the four quatrains, which Jahnsen noted as original, the poem moves from a description of the "rude forefathers of the hamlet" and their unrealized potentials, and the assertion that absence of worldly achievement was in their lives balanced by other virtues, to the universal desire for a memorial, material and even personal. The extremely personal lines can be cited here :

The thoughtless world to Majesty may bow
Exalt the brave, and idolize Success
But more to Innocence their Safety owe
Than Power and Genius e'er conspired to bless

And thou, who'mindful of the.unhonour'd Dead
Dost in these Notes their artless Tale relate
By Night and lonely Contemplation led
To linger in the gloomy walks of Fate

Hark how the sacred Calm, that broods around
Bids ev'ry fierce tumultuous Passion cease
In still small Accents whisp'ring from the Ground
A grateful Earnest of eternal Peace.

No more with Reason and thyself at Strife,
Give anxious Cares and endless Wishes room
But thro' the cool sequester'd Vale of Life
Pursue the salient Tanour of thy Doom.

These lines clearly remind us of the still greater *Sapphics* that Cowper wrote after his attempted suicide in 1763 :

Hatred and vengeance, my eternal portion,
Scarce can endure delay of execution,
Wait, with impatient readiness, to seize my soul in a moment.

F. W. Bateson, in his article⁴ entitled "Gray's Elegy Reconsidered" observes, "Gray, too, is thinking aloud. He is trying to cheer himself up in the face of a bitter disappointment. The anxious 'Cares' and endless 'Wishes' are not poetical ornaments, but his own private demons, 'the fierce tumultuous Passion' of a young man who has found 'Reason' an insufficient support in a suddenly hostile world." The analysis given by Bateson is quite appropriate because it provides a clue to the inner conflict in Gray's poem.

In this way the *Elegy* is a lyric cry of despair in a disillusioned age. Reason had failed and the poet is left in a starless night of the soul. H. Ellis in his article "Gray's Elegy : The Biographical Problem in Literary Criticism,"⁵ finds here an autobiographical document because the stanzas themselves are full of reminiscences of the trials of life which the poet felt constantly and deeply :

The Lord High Steward's grand Procession
The Boast of Heraldry the Pomp of Power,
and finally, the awful pronouncement of sentence ;
And all, that Beauty, all that Wealth, e'er gave
Awits alike th' inevitable Hour.
The Paths of Glory lead but to the Grave.

"The Stanzas written in a 'Country Churchyard' were originally 'an artless Tale' about Thomas Gray, not about 'the unhonoured Dead' just as *Lycidas* is essentially a 'Doric-lay' about John Milton, not about the 'unwept Edward King.' "

But this is by no means all that the *Elegy* says, and it ignores some powerful emotional undercurrents in the poet. For Gray is seeing the 'rude Forefathers' of the hamlet in two roles simultaneously, both as the happiest of men, and as the unfortunate victims of progress. This basic ambivalence in all probability would go to reveal conflicting emotional responses. How far Gray was conscious of this ambivalence in his *Elegy*, we cannot satisfactorily decide. The 'graveyard mood' prompted him to write the *Elegy*, as it is clear from the style in which he expressed it. At the same time, his native and natural sorrow and ennui, behind which lay all the frustrations of his life, impelled him in the poem. The union of the popular poetic taste with the natural feelings of the poet's heart gave the poem a unique orchestration and there are thus more in the poem than what we can hope to get on the apparent surface of it.

A.E. Dyson⁶ finds a sort of complexity or a tension of opposites in Gray's *Elegy* : "There exist two attitudes quite explicitly side by side in the poem and we can legitimately speculate on the subconscious

responses to life which they reveal. These would seem to have included a shrinking from life with its menaces and responsibilities (something very like the Freudian death wish) in fact, also a recurrent desire for life (the almost inevitable complementary pull.)

Gray's letters often show him in a Hamlet-like strain of frustration and melancholia. A.E. Dyson says⁶ that all the attitudes of Hamlet are present in the *Elegy* though with less imaginative intensity, of course, than in *Hamlet*: and so the stanzas which approve the lot of the forefathers, spring not only from a reasoned Augustan belief in the rural life but also from a vicarious realization of the death wish. Dyson compares Gray with "Hamlet of Act V, assured of the impossibility of what he most desired, stoically resigned to life on these terms (there's providence in the fall of asparrow), yet haunted by the futility of it all (Alas, poor Yarrick), and still balancing in his mind the great alternative propositions (To be or not to be)."

In the final stanza, he identifies himself with the rustics and pictures his own death with them, without any ambition and self-fulfilment. Here the ambivalence of the poet's emotional response is especially to be felt. *A Youth To Fortune and to Fame Unknown* invites our pity; his simple contentment, as the epitaph sums up, being this that,

He gain'd from Heav'n ('t was all he wish'd) a friend.

Cleanth Brooks describes the inner meaning of the *Elegy* which is not a poem to him but a *Well Wrought Urn*, as he says⁷: "The *Elegy* has a structure which we neglect at our peril if we mean to pass judgment on it as a poem, or even if we are merely to point to it as a poem. It is a 'storied Urn,' after all, and many of us will conclude that, like Donne's, it is a *Well Wrought Urn* superior to the half-acre tombs of the Proud."

Gray suffered from constitutional melancholy, that 'black' melancholy which overcast all his possible future hopes. For this reason, many of his literary projects were undertaken in a spirit almost of resigned hopelessness:

I am a sort of spider, and have little else to do but spin my web over again, or creep to some other place and spin there. Alas I for one who has nothing to do but amuse himself. I believe my amusements are as little amusing as most folk's.

He lived the life of a recluse devoid of romance and adventure, and he achieved few of the successes that make such a course worthwhile. As he wrote to Horace Walpole in 1738:

My motions at present (which you are pleased to ask after) are much like those of a pendulum or (Logically speaking) oscillatory.

I swing from Chapel or Hall to Home and from Home to Chapel or Hall.

Poor Gray was a sensitively poetical soul, a total misfit in the hearty and idle grossness of eighteenth-century Cambridge. This sense of maladjustment, however, does not find free expression in his earlier poems because he was still then fettered by the eighteenth-century poetic convention. In the *Elegy* he finds the answer to his problem. Here he is able to give full expression to his private despair and frustrations. In the *Elegy*, however, though conventional devices are seldom absent, the poet moves with easier steps and lays bare the secret anguish of his own heart in the concluding stanzas. Graham Hough observes⁸ : "The personal reference becomes more evident in the closing lines. The listless youth, muttering his wayward fancies in solitude and dying young, is in the first place, West, who, like Milton's Lycidas, cherished poetic ambitions that were frustrated by an early death. Secondly, he is Gray himself, West's alter ego, also ambitious, hypochondriacal and unhappy and likely enough to come to a similar end." In this way, quite justifiably, Graham Hough equates Gray-West persona with Milton-Edward King.

The *Epitaph* sums up the whole, and provides another argument—and to Gray, the final one :

No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose,)
The bosom of his Father and his God.

Here Gray gives a picture of his own self which reminds us of his letter to West from Florence, in April 1741, in which his character is best painted by himself. He says : "As I am recommending myself to your love, methink I ought to send you my picture. You must add then to your former idea, two years of age, a reasonable quality of dullness a great deal of silence, and, something that rather resembles, than is, thinking ; a confused notion of many strange and fine things that have shone before my eyes for sometime, a want of love for general society ; indeed an inability to it. On the good side you may add a sensibility for what others feel and indulgence for their faults and weakness, a love of truth and detestation of everything else. Then you are to deduct a little impertinence, a little laughter, a great deal of pride and some spirits." And here is a similar strain from his poetry :

Too poor for a bribe, and too proud to importune,
He had not the method of making a fortune :
Could love, and could hate, so was thought somewhat odd.
No very great wit, he believed in a God.

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KUBLA KHAN : A STUDY IN SYNTHESIS

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Born in the 'timeless cell of dreams' 'Kubla Khan' is a source of perennial delight. In it the spirit of Poetry is everywhere. It is a pity that the poem is a fragment. But as poetry it is perfect even as fragment. That is one of the reasons why Humphry House says : 'If Coleridge had never published his Preface, who would have thought of "Kubla Khan" as a fragment ?' ¹ Walter Jackson Bate seems to echo similar sentiments : 'Few readers would think that "Kubla Khan" is a fragment' ². Though the poem is composed in a dream, it does not suffer from such irregularity as might mar its poetic beauty. It has the symmetry of a finished work of art.

The poem, inspired by Coleridge's reading of 'Purchas's Pilgrimage', shows the power of the unconscious. As to the cause the dream it can be safely said that the unconscious worked in him as a result of homesickness, a term which, Henry Newbolt thinks, is best suited to express the romantic longing of the spirit. Coleridge had in him such a longing and the poem is the reproduction of 'the ecstasy in imaginative fulfillment' ³. Graham Hough describes the poem 'as a fragment of psychic life' ⁴. But we would rather take the poem as a psychological release where there is an unconscious revelation of the longing self. In its concentration on the self the poem fulfils an important condition of romanticism. The dream perfectly recaptures the sensational awareness of the poet's longing self and thus also offers scope for the analysis of the dreamer—his instinctive nature. From the dreamer we can make an analysis of the nature of the dream which is selective, never confusing and abrupt. In the concluding paragraph of his essay on 'Kubla Khan', Bate describes the poem as simply 'a fanciful embroidery of something he had read—in fact a fanciful development of something he had been actually reading at that very moment—*Purchas : his Pilgrims*,⁵ but the 'fanciful embroidery' to which Bate refers is an incomplete formula for Coleridge's poem. It cannot be interpreted without any reference to the longing of the spirit or self. It is the romantic poet's personal self that goads and helps the 'fanciful embroidery'. It is the longing spirit that sets the winged chariot of the poet's fancy roam in the region of romance and causes the 'fanciful

development'. So Coleridge's reading of *Purchas's Pilgrimage* could not by itself cause the dream poem ; and it is much more than a 'fanciful embroidery' of something the poet had read.

The facts about the composition of 'Kubla Khan' offer a fascinating study. While living in a lonely farm house on the Exmoor confines of Somerset and Devonshire in the summer of 1797, Coleridge took an anodyne to prevent indisposition. The immediate effect of taking an anodyne was that he fell in profound sleep for about three hours. Immediately before his sleep Coleridge, as we know from his own account of the composition of the poem, was reading the following from *Purchas's Pilgrimage*⁵ : Here the Kubla Khan commanded a palace to be built, and a stately garden thereunto. And thus ten miles of fertile ground were enclosed by a wall⁶. The images that rose up before him in his dream were being reproduced by him immediately after waking and without any conscious effort. But the recollection was never completed as he was suddenly interrupted for an hour by a person who came to him on business from Porlock. The interruption resulted in a fragmentary reproduction of the dream-poem, as Coleridge could not retain after it the entire vision which, he said, 'passed away like the images on the surface of a stream into which a stone has been cast'.⁷

It is evident that Coleridge, the philosopher, could be an inspired dreamer. It is definitely here that the poet with his dreaming eyes could give to airy nothing a permanent habitation. The poem remains as a recollection of Coleridge's dream-vision, the imaginative experience in which his soul delighted in wonder. The poem shows how the poet can reject the external world by completely relying upon the world which is private, arbitrary and irrational. The poet's soul's joy lay in the expectation of the revival of the symphony and song of the Abyssinian maid. The lines that suggest this expectation of delight are set in a rising crescendo which, however, coincides with the spirit of mystery of the close :

Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 't would win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air.

It would not be too fanciful to search for Miltonic reminiscences in 'Kubla Khan'. The description of Kubla Khan's walled garden 'bright with sinuous rills' and 'many an incense-bearing tree' recalls in our memory Milton's description of the Garden of Eden, 'that fair field of

Enna' ('Paradise Lost' IV, 268-9). Coleridge's 'Mount Abora' and 'Abyssinian maid' recall Milton's 'Mount Amara' and 'Abassin Kings' ('Paradise Lost', IV, 280-3). This is, as Humphry House aptly says, Coleridge's 'Miltonising'.

Yet Humphry House who sees the resemblances between Milton and Coleridge thinks that this approximation to, or parallelism between, Kubla's garden and the Paradise of Eden 'causes a positive distortion of the poem's on the ground that Kubla is not Adam. But it can be stated against Humphry House's contention that Kubla, essentially human, loves architectural splendour and is a dignified Tartar, an imaginative aesthete, a representative lover of pleasure and beauty, and as such, has his points of kinship with Adam.

The idea of demon-lover, which has direct reference to witchcraft, owes its origin to a common theme used in the classical mythology and the medieval ballads in which Coleridge was interested. Demons, who come to seduce women in the form of human beings, are found to be favourites of the ballad writers.

It is astonishing, and more so because the poem was composed in a dream, how Coleridge even in dream could collect ingredients, so weird and fantastic, from different sources and could transform them altogether by the rich alchemy of his imagination. Imagination is, as Coleridge himself says, the soul of poetic genius. And in the shaping power of imagination lies one of the central principles of romantic art. This esemplastic power explains the eclectic nature of his dream. The process which worked behind the amalgamation of these diverse elements in the poem is what Coleridge calls 'the streamy nature of association.' It is evident how Coleridge's imagination ranged over wide field—from Xanadu to Abyssinia, from the account of the medieval ballads and Elizabethan exploration to the history of China and Greek myths. Besides, it has been suggested by Livingston Lowes that Coleridge, apart from reading 'Purchas's Pilgrimage', also read James Bruce's *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* and Thomas Maurice's *History of Hindostan*.

The symbols used in the poem relate it to the Platonic tradition. As a school-boy Coleridge read the neo-platonists in translation and later had also read some Greek Philosophers in the original. The images, which can also be related to 'Purchas's Pilgrimage', are more in the Platonic tradition. The sacred river Alph has its prototype in Greek myths. The very word 'Alph' is derived from the Greek word 'Alpheus' which is one of the largest rivers in Greece. The mystery round the Alph can be traced back to Greek sources. The 'sunless sea' contains

Greek symbol as it reminds one of Odysseus' journey on the sea. It would be highly relevant to mention here that the sea plays a significant role in romantic poetry and specially in the poetry of Coleridge. The entire theme of 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' is based on a sea-voyage. The sea is the part and parcel of Coleridge's story. In 'Kubla Khan' Coleridge thrice refers to the sacred river, Alph, and describes with characteristic details its winding :

And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momentarily the sacred river.
Five miles mendering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man.

In the treatment of the supernatural 'Kubla Khan' perfectly illustrates Coleridge's poetic creed : 'That willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith'.⁹ Here, as in 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner', the moon is largely instrumental in creating the supernatural atmosphere. The world conceived in 'Kubla Khan' is a dim, distant world, far away from our world of meddling intellect. Yet it is not so intangible to Coleridge, the poet sorcerer who knows all the secrets of the enchanted world of Xanadu. The poet, with the help of the 'waning moon', creates an artistic apotheosis to describe a charmed savage place:

A savage place I as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By a woman waiting for her demon-lover !

Poetic magic has reached here its ultimate limits : it can go no further. Referring to these lines (and to the two lines of Keats on the 'magic casements') Kipling says : "Remember that in all the millions permitted there are no more than five—five little lines—of which one can say : 'These are the pure Magic, These are the clear vision. The rest is only poetry.'"¹⁰

Suggestiveness, which is a feature of all great art, is the poet's forte. He can conjure the vision of the mysterious world of Xanadu with infinite suggestiveness. The shadow of Kubla Khan's 'dome of pleasure'; floating midway on the waves, may be taken to suggest the ultimate fragility of the dome. The unsubstantial nature of Kubla's dome of pleasure has been forcefully conveyed through the floating image. The oriental monarch's vanity and his desire for pleasure are not matched with corresponding wisdom. Throughout the poem some mystery is suggested. Mystery is associated with the Alph which, while mendering, reaches caverns measureless to man and finally sinks in tumult to a lifeless ocean. In spite of Coleridge's description of Kubla Khan as an aesthete, the

monarch is not totally shorn of his traditional character—the Kubla Khan of history. Kubla's inherent love of war has been finely suggested in these lines :

And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war !

It is also through suggestiveness that Coleridge successfully maintained what Humphry House calls 'the factual—visual consistency'.

Though Coleridge was supposed to have been in a trance, his mental faculty seems to have been fully alert. Thus 'Kubla Khan' is a conscious outcome of an unconscious creative process. Herbert Read, while commenting on the poem, harmonises these two contradictory attitudes of the mind—the unconscious and the conscious. Read says : 'There is nothing surprising in this. I believe that every sound we hear and every object we see is instantaneously recorded by the brain whether or not we consciously register the experience. Our consciousness is only a tiny aperture opening on to the wide world of the unconscious—a finger in an intimate range of indexes'.¹¹

'Kubla Khan' offers a study in contrasts. Contrast is between the poet's present state and the desired state when the song of the Abyssinian maid would delight his soul and inspire him to create—to build the dome in the air. From joy of music thus came the bold assertion of creation. This reminds me of the great Upanisadic truth that it is out of joy that this universe has been created. The oriental source of Kubla's dome of pleasure and Kubla himself are in contrast with the occidental source of the Alph. Contrast between heat and cold is conspicuous in the line :

A sunny pleasure-dome, with caves of ice !

It is in the fusion of the contrasts that the miracle of Kubla Khan's pleasure—dome lies. The pointed contrasts deepen the sense of mystery which runs through the poem.

Besides contrast, the poem depicts a wide variety of feelings and moods—those of delight, surprise, fear, enthusiasm and ecstasy.

The poet is, under the bewitching spell of the Abyssinian maid's song which has been experienced only once. The experience has made the poet a captive of the maid's music. He is keen on reviving within him her symphony and song :

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw :
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on the dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora.

Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me.

These lines superbly illustrate the captivating power of music.

'Kubla Khan' is certainly the creation of an 'archangel', but an archangel whose limbs are *not* damaged. A dream poem without the incoherence and mistiness of a dream, 'Kubla Khan' is a marvel of romantic imagination, a miracle of rare device. Here Coleridge seems to set the limit of the nineteenth century imaginative verse. The liberation of imagination, of which the poem is a fine product, shows how in a romantic poem there can be perfect dissociation of imaginative life from everyday reality. Sure it is that the poem offers an escape from reality. But it does not stop there. It carries us out of our confining existence to that enchanted land of beauty and wonder which lulls the imagination of the eternal child in us. Poems like 'Kubla Khan' do not assert but create, not inform, but move. Such poems give a taste of life of pure sensations unalloyed by thought. For such a life Keats aspired in one of his letters to his friend Bailey. In its evocation of pure sensations, 'Kubla Khan' fulfils the purpose of poetry; for the purpose of poetry, says Herbert Read, 'is the enhancement of the enjoyment of life, either by sensuous celebration of its immediate qualities, as in lyrical poetry, or by communication of its ultimate meaning, as in epic and dramatic myths'¹². Poetry is the essence of literature and 'Kubla Khan' is the quintessence of poetry. 'True poetry', says Robert Lynd, 'begins with the delighted use of the sense. It creates the mermaid, the unicorn and the fiery dragon. It peoples the vague unknown with witches on broomsticks and fairies and beasts that are kings' sons in disguise. Distance has no terrors for it, and we can travel over impossible spaces either in seven league boots or by the light of the candle'.¹³ 'Kubla Khan' is indeed a specimen of 'true poetry' par excellence.

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D. H. LAWRENCE ON GALSWORTHY

ANIMA BISWAS

John Galsworthy was once the doyen of the literary world, and the profusion of honours bestowed on him indicates his eminence as a man of letters : he refused Knighthood in 1917, but accepted the Order of Merit in 1929 ; he received honorary degrees from several universities—Manchester, Dublin, Cambridge, Sheffield, Princeton and Oxford ; for almost twelve years he had been the President of the P. E. N. club ; a public figure, he was also a best-selling author. The culmination was the award of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1932. But to the 'superior' critics to-day Galsworthy is no longer alive, and this denigration of his reputation is to a great extent due to the scathing attack made by D. H. Lawrence in *Scrutinies* (1928). William Bellamy rightly points out that the modern criticism of Galsworthy 'has been fixed in the direction established'¹ by Lawrence's attack. Andor Gomme also thinks that Lawrence goes to the heart of 'the fatal weakness which makes Galsworthy so palpably second-rate'.² My object in this essay is to sort out Lawrence's critical principles vis-a-vis Galsworthy and to examine their validity.

D. H. Lawrence's criticism of Galsworthy's art is contained in the essay entitled "John Galsworthy" (written in 1927, and published in *Scrutinies* in 1928) and in another article, originally unnamed, but later called "The Individual Consciousness V. the Social Consciousness"—both included in *Phoenix* (1936), edited by Edward D. McDonald. Lawrence's attack on Galsworthy proceeded in three directions : the Galsworthy's approach to life and reality is sentimental and he fails in his treatment of love and sex which he only sentimentalises ; that his characters are social beings rather than free human individuals ; and that he is in grain a bourgeois and surrenders ultimately to the bourgeois values and attitudes which he proposes to attack.*

McDonald, in his Introduction to *Phoenix*, points out that Lawrence's attitude is 'unremittingly hostile' and 'to some extent vitiated by personal

* Lawrence's third charge against Galsworthy about his surrender to the bourgeois values is not discussed in this paper—first, because Lawrence does not elaborate his premises, and secondly, because socialist critics take up this charge and develop it into a consolidated attack on Galsworthy, the discussion of which requires a separate paper.

animus towards Galsworthy'. The dislike, both at the personal and at the literary level, was mutual. Galsworthy praised some parts of Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* and recognised him as a 'provincial genius', but he denounced the other parts of the novel, and considered *The Rainbow* 'a failure as a work of art'.³ And in 1918 he refused to give Lawrence any material or moral support. All these must have deepened Lawrence's prejudice against Galsworthy. However, Lawrence's personal animus, unmistakably reflected in the first essay mentioned above, may be left out of consideration, and it would be pertinent to discuss here only those aspects of Lawrence's criticism which have literary significance. Incidentally, Lawrence's charges are all directed against Galsworthy's novels and not against his plays. The main charge is that in Galsworthy's novels there is not a single 'really vivid human being' or 'human individual', that all Galsworthy characters are merely 'social individuals'. Does Lawrence mean by 'social individuals' only those people whose individuality has been subdued by the dominant influences of society or who have surrendered their individuality to the money-sway? Such people would surely have no real individuality or independence; they would be only 'slaves'. But Lawrence calls Irene a 'social being'. Why? Does she surrender to the money-sway or moral code of the Forsytes? She is a symbol of the forces that weaken and undermine the Forstye order, and Soames, we may note, is never for a moment sure of her loyalty or attachment.

We may point out here that realistic art depicts man in his complex relationship with society, and does not treat him in complete isolation from his social surroundings. Man has an individual self, but he is also a social being, and his identity is determined to a great extent by the pressure of social forces. The compulsions of life and also his gregarious instinct lead man to form organised communities, but it is also part of man's tragic destiny that his individual self can never adjust itself fully to the demands of society. And Lawrence wants precisely to ignore this subjective-objective cleavage in an individual, and also the individual's inevitable isolation from the 'universe continuum' (Lawrence's term);

As soon as the conception *me or you, me or it* enters the human consciousness, then the individual consciousness is supplanted by social consciousness.⁴

This conception of the individual is totally unrealistic and seems to be based on mysticism rather than human psychology at best on parapsychology that pretends to sublimate man back into the unfallen state of 'the old Adam', 'the *innocent or radical* individual consciousness' which is 'unanalysable' and 'mysterious'. Lawrence admits that even a

child now has lost the radical innocence, because the moment he says 'Mummy', his 'fatal consciousness of the cleft between him and Mummy is already obvious'.⁵

Lawrence enlists Hamlet, Lear and Oedipus as real individuals. But do they fit in with his formulation of a real Individual? Is not Hamlet acutely aware of his mother's cleavage from him by her hasty marriage with his uncle two months after his father's death? His individuality seems to consist in the awareness of this cleavage which gradually widens as the play moves on to its final catastrophe. That he is aware of this cleavage even at the beginning of the play is evident from his response to his uncle-calling him 'my son':

Hamlet. [Aside] A little more than kin, and less than kind.

Queen. ... Do not forever with thy veiled lids

Seek for thy noble father in the dust:

Thou know'st 'tis common; all that live must die,

Passing through nature to eternity.

Hamlet. Ay, madam, 'tis common.

Queen, If it be,

Why seems it so particular with thee?

Hamlet. Seems, madam I nay, it is; I know not "seems".

(Act I Scene II, ll. 65-76),

The fact that Lear thinks it necessary to divide his kingdom among his daughters in proportion to the amount of love they declare for him indicates his consciousness of the 'fatal cleft'. Oedipus' encounter with the blind seer Teiresias similarly shows his 'isolation'. And it is precisely in this kind of isolation from and not in the so-called at-oneness with their world that their individuality consists. Oedipus is always ready to fulfil his duty to the Thebans in their crisis, and it is this readiness that goads him on to discover the dark sins he had unknowingly committed. The characters in Galsworthy's novels have also their private and social selves held together. Sometimes the opposition takes the form of an unresolved tension, sometimes the individual self yields to the pressure of more powerful forces. The social consciousness tends to predominate; but the private self resists and protests, not always with success. It is this interaction that gives vitality to Galsworthy's characters, to the Forsytes and the Pencyces.

Lawrence's second charge is that Galsworthy nastily sentimentalises the sex relationship between man and woman and even turns it into 'doggishness'. We may note here the way Lawrence describes Galsworthy's characters; he calls them names—dogs, bitches, property prostitutes, property hounds, parasites. About four printed pages of the

essay "John Galsworthy" are given to such animadversions, and the 'dog' image is recurrent :

The whole thing is doggy to a degree. The man
has a temporary 'hunger' ; he is 'on the heat'
as they say of dogs. The heat passes. It's done.
Trot away, if you are not tangled. Trot off,
looking shamefacedly over your shoulder.
People have been watching ! Damn them ! But
never mind, it'll blow over. Thank God, the
bitch is trotting in the other direction.
She'll soon have another trail of dogs after
her. That'll wipe out my traces. Good for that !
Next time I'll get properly married and do
my doggishness in my own house.

Baker rightly says that 'Lawrence grows more and more hysterical, carried away by his sexual monomania'.⁶ Lawrence complains about *To Let* that it is all about 'money' and that the emotions are 'faked, faked, faked' ; he fails to see Galsworthy's intention which is precisely to satirize both 'money' and 'faked emotions', the sway of money and spurious emotionalism.

In the same essay Lawrence views Galsworthy's long tale entitled *The Apple Tree* (1916) almost in similar light. He utterly fails to see the purity, unselfishness and intensity of Megan's love for Ashurst and dubs her declaration ('I shall die if I can't be with you' 'I only want to be with you') 'prostitutional announcement'. He calls Ashurst 'a narcissistic young gentleman'. How, then, could he love Stella Halliday and marry her ? The ready answer is : 'He marries the young lady, true to his class'. How, again, was he not led by his narcissistic nature to self-destruction ? The glib answer is : Narcissus, in Mr. Galsworthy, doesn't drown himself. He asks Ophelia, or Megan, kindly to drown herself instead.' One cannot, however, overlook Ashurst's agonies and remorse, the torturing conflict in his mind, and miss the force of his realisation that he would be a beast, 'no better than a common seducer'. One cannot also miss the symbolism of his attempt to drown himself in the sea and of his swimming out of it with sudden resolution :

His heart felt sore, but no longer ached ;
his body cool and refreshed.

Megan's vision of the dreaded gipsy bogle also carries a symbolic meaning. The supernatural is a part of the country life in Devonshire, quite in tune with the whole atmosphere. The simple farm children, old Jim, Megan — all believe that Farmer Narracombe saw the gipsy bogle before his death. Even old Jim claims to have seen it :

'And you really do think it was there ?'
 The lame man answered cautiously : 'I shouldn't
 like to say rightly that 't was their. 'T was in
 my mind as 't was there.'

Megan knows that the rich young man fresh from college is beyond her reach, and she is aware of the yawning gap that separates them ; and yet she falls fatally for him. Hence her vision of the bogle in a strange setting—'the living, unearthly beauty of the apple blossom'. She knows her own fate, and her defeat and death are not totally meaningless. Megan realises in her death the eternal power of 'the Cyprian', the goddess of Love ; she becomes the symbol of love in public memory in the countryside ; she becomes the symbol of beauty, the unachievable 'elysium in life' which can only be captured in a work of art. It is much later, after about twenty-five years, that Ashurst sees what Megan really was—the beauty and joy which he had failed to recapture. His beautiful wife, an artist, paints a picture of Megan's grave under the old apple tree, knowing nothing of Megan. But the picture seems to lack something, it seems to miss the reality of the experience :

Ashurst rose, took his wife's sketch, and
 stared at it in silence.

'Is the foreground right, Frank ?'

'Yes.'

'But there's something wanting, is n't there ?'

Ashurst nodded. Wanting ? The apple tree,
 the singing and the gold !

Lawrence does not see how Galsworthy depicts the growth of passion so realistically in three hearts. Ashurst and Stella are of the same class, and they marry, while Megan dies prematurely. Megan is defeated in life, but death invests her life with a new significance. And on the silver-wedding the truth comes deeply home to Ashurst that love and beauty are with the victim rather than with the worldly victors. Ernest A. Baker seems to miss this deeper significance of the story in his passing reference to it as 'A vulgarised pendant to the affair of Hilary Dallison and the little model' in *Fraternity*. The significance of the Ashurst-Megan episode in idyllic surroundings is not in any way analogous to that of Hillary's affair with a slum girl in a modern city. Megan's death and Ashurst's painful realisation at the end of what he has lost in her death imply a totally different order of values.

Though Galsworthy does nowhere deny 'exaggeration' its due role in art, he has clearly rejected the romantic exaggeration of individual character when it crosses the limit set by Aristotle in Chapter XIII of *Poetics* : the character should be 'the intermediate kind of personage',

neither pre-eminently virtuous and just nor wholly vicious. Galsworthy's realism insists on inner restraint of this kind. And to cross these restraints in other fields—say, when the theme is more elemental than social or moral problems, when the artist is called upon to treat of passion—is equally wrong. That is why he thinks that to write grossly of sex is 'to err aesthetically—to over-paint'.⁸ This brings Galsworthy's attitude to sex in direct confrontation with D. H. Lawrence's. Lawrence's arguments for open and straight-forward treatment of sex in literature and art may be summed up in the following way. First, sex is a powerful, beneficial and necessary stimulus in human life, and people who are repelled by it are really perverts—thwarted, unfulfilled people who had developed a hatred of fellow-men. Secondly, half the great poems, pictures, music and stories of the world—the song of Solomon, *Jane Eyre*, the work of Titian, Renoir, Mozart—are all great by virtue of the beauty of their sex appeal. Thirdly, so long as the sexual feelings are straight-forward and frank, they are healthy. The moment they become sneaking and sly and develop the 'dirty little secret'⁹ about them, they are unhealthy; and such a treatment of sex is pornography, which is 'the attempt to insult sex, to do dirt on it'.¹⁰ Fourthly, those who want to keep off sex as a secret thing do indirectly plead for masturbation, the effect of which on the individual is always pernicious; it produces a null effect and a narcissus circle of self-enclosure—

Enclosed within the vicious circle of the self, with no vital contacts outside, the self becomes emptier, till it is almost a nullus, a nothingness.¹¹

Lawrence suggests that the only way to get out of this 'vicious circle' is to come out quite simply and naturally with it, because in a normal sex relation between a man and a woman there is a reciprocity, a give-and-take, and because sex is 'the fountain-head of our energetic life'.

Galsworthy regarded Lawrence as a 'provincial genius', 'obsessed with self', a type of writer he 'could not get on with'.¹² He expresses his view on Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* in a letter to Edward Garnett (April 13, 1914). While he thinks that 'there's genius' in that part of the book which deals with the father, the mother and the sons, he finds totally unconvincing the Miriam-Clara-Paul sex-triangle. Why? Galsworthy adduces several reasons. First, he thinks that Lawrence's treatment of sex in that particular context is a kind of unhealthy 'revelling in the shades of sex emotions'. Secondly, he finds 'a queer indecency' in Lawrence's treatment of sex, and here he contrasts Lawrence's treatment with Maupassant's: Maupassant sees the essentials, while Lawrence only 'revels in the unessentials'. Thirdly, Galsworthy thinks

that the sensations and physical movements connected with sexual union are too well-known to require painstaking description by an artist. Fourthly, Galsworthy argues that 'the body's never worthwhile': Tolstoy, Turgenev, Chekhov, Maupassant, Flaubert, Anatole France—that is to say, all great artists—'only use the body, and that sparingly, to reveal the soul'. Fifthly, the part of the novel that irritates him most is the part with Miriam 'whence the body is rigidly excluded, but in which you smell the prepossession (with the body) which afterwards takes possession'.

Galsworthy's chief contention is that to make much of the 'physical side of love' is to violate the inner restraints that art demands. The sex impulse is an essential fact of human life, but for which 'we should none of us be here'.¹³ Galsworthy has three main objections to the emphasis on the physical side of love. First, all men know so much about sex that to tell us more is 'to carry coals to Newcastle'.¹⁴ He thinks it to be the proper subject for 'scientific treatises', not for art. He is obviously not alive to the dangers to which, as Lawrence points out, the scientific treatment of sex may lead:

But by being wise and scientific in the serious and earnest manner you only tend to disinfest the dirty little secret, and either kill sex altogether with too much seriousness and intellect or else leave it a miserable disinfected secret.¹⁵

But the second objection of Galsworthy involves a vital question of aesthetics. He says:

the sex impulse is so strong that any *emphatic* physical description pulls the picture out of perspective.¹⁶

Lawrence is more concerned with the importance of sex in human life than with the aesthetic question. He is primarily a reformer, and he believes that 'if the purity-with-a-dirty-little-secret lie is kept up much longer, the mass of society will really be an idiot, and a dangerous idiot at that'.¹⁷ Galsworthy's objection is that a thorough exploration of sex can hardly achieve the necessary reform:

A naive or fanatical novelist may think that by thoroughly exploring sex he can reform the human attitude to it; but a man might as well enter the bowels of the earth with the intention of coming out on the other side.¹⁸

Lawrence is bitterly critical of Galsworthy's treatment of the sexual relationship. He thinks Galsworthy collapses as soon as he comes to sex which he nastily sentimentalizes. In the relationship of Irene and Bosinney (in *The Man of Property*) he finds 'nothing but a doggish amorousness'¹⁹; in Shelton's attitude to Antonia (in *The Island Pharisees*) there is nothing of 'the real meaning of sex, which involves

the whole of a human being'.³⁰ Lawrence complains that Galsworthy really brings down sex to a 'low and bastard level'. That this charge is not valid is amply demonstrated in Larry Darrant's involvement with Wanda in the short play *The First and the Last*. What Lawrence regards as Galsworthy's sentimentalism is actually an attempt at raising physical passion to the level of moral and spiritual involvement. Larry could easily shirk responsibility and save their family prestige as well as the career of his elder brother Keith Darrant, K.C. But he chooses to commit suicide along with Wanda, a prostitute. Indeed, Galsworthy thinks it the artist's task to depict realistically 'the atmosphere and psychology of passion',³¹ the trackless maze of desire, to convey the scent and colour of passion, the fascination and fateful lure of love. And in his novel *The Dark Flower* Galsworthy deals with this theme of passion rendering it more natural and beautiful than the treatment of Paul-Miriam-Clara relationship. The artist must not treat such a theme grossly :

The artist is better advised to pay no attention, but to tell the truth as delicately and decently as he can.³²

Galsworthy's insistence on delicacy and decency does not indicate a prudish obsession with decorum and propriety. His is primarily an aesthetic concern to maintain the precarious balance ; he is aware of the hazards of treating the theme openly and nakedly and as he says, any emphatic physical description may tend to pull the picture out of perspective. In art there is a certain distillation of sensations and while distillation effects a purgation of grosser elements, it also ensures an aesthetic perception of experiences. Galsworthy does not elaborate his argument, but the implication of his statement is that the sex impulse is so powerful that a rendering of this impulse in all its nudity would hinder aesthetic perception.

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3. Mentioned by Lawrence in his Foreward to *Bibliography of the Writings of D. H. Lawrence*, Edward D. McDonald ; quoted in *Phoenix*, p. 234.
4. Lawrence, "Individual Consciousness V. Social Consciousness". *Phoenix*, p. 761. Italic Lawrence's.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 762.
6. Baker, E.A. *History of the English Novel*, vol. X, chapter 7, p.333 (footnote).

7. *Ibid.*, p. 344. Baker also accepts D.H. Lawrence's charge that the story indulges in narcissism. Baker rejects Lawrence's main charges against Galsworthy as a novelist, but in the assessment of this story he seems to be rather uncritically swayed by Lawrence's opinion.

8. Galsworthy, "Faith of a Novelist", *Candelabra*,

9. D. H. Lawrence, "Pornography and Obscenity", *Phoenix*, p. 177. Lawrence's arguments as enumerated here are all taken from this essay.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 175.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 180.

12. An entry in Galsworthy's Diaries, dated November 13, 1917; *The Life and Letters of John Galsworthy*, ed. by H. V. Marrot, p. 433.

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MONIKA VARMA'S POETRY :

AN APPRECIATION

K. LAHIRI

Among Indian writers of verse in English Monika Varma finds her place naturally in the small, now expanding, group of women contributors to which Toru Dutt and Sarojini Naidu of the earlier generation belonged. Her poems may not always attain the high musical quality of Sarojini's songs or the naive ease of Tarubala's lyrics, but they always have a distinctive charm of their own marked by a rare richness of experience, emotion and intellect.

A product of modern complex civilisation, Monika can hardly avoid being often subtle in her ways of feeling and thought, 'Good poetry', as Nissim Ezakiel avers in his Preface to her *Dragon Flies Draw Flame*, 'is not always clear and lucid'. Subtlety results from an inevitable mingling of direct experience, animated emotion and stimulated intellect. Detached observation and personalized expression interpenetrate and enrich each other :

I see stork leg children
Watch sleek cars slip by—
Wind on lush grass bends and sways.

(*Drongo*)

She sees simultaneously primitive earth (lush grass) and civilization (sleek car) juxtaposed, and the human identified with the natural world (stork leg children).

Her poetic creed rests on the intrinsic worth of experience. *The Flower* is a poem as well as the poet's credo : the music and the imagery of poetry are the roar and foam that break out of the ocean swell of experience. She observes

a naked child...sitting,...
throwing handfuls of dust
over its limbs,

and the poem is born. She has doubt about her own worth as poet but none about the significance of her experience ;

I saw. Am I that important ?
No, but my seeing is.

Notwithstanding Matthew Arnold's dictum to the contrary, poetry of the moment is great in its intensity and in its cosmic comprehensiveness. So is contemporary poetry, essentially poetry of the moment, great in its way. And Monika's is no exception : in depth and range her experience of a moment gains proportions of eternity. She ever feels

a drift of poems in the breeze,

and catches one at ease,

This she is enabled to do because of her perpetual consciousness of life and its worth. The modern poet's ever-awake sense of alive-ness is oppressively there when she observes a bright expanse of ripe yellow crop as 'fire of field' (*No Meaning Any More*). And the same awareness of life is also unobtrusively there when she perceives the silent eternal hills :

quit we stay.

quiet in being just mountains and I.

Is this the region of the unconscious or the superconscious ?—the feeling of bare existence, which is the common breeding ground of poetry, philosophy and religion ?

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Does Monika Varma's poetic creation anywhere show features of a derivative character, or is it ever fresh and original ? With all her freshness she has moments of affinity with and absorption from English poets, particularly from the early nineteenth century Romantics. Some elements like attitudes and moods, even imagery and turns of expression, seem to be directly influenced by them.

In *No Meaning Any More* she speaks of 'silence of a rose', which is a right Keatsian experience, associating sound—rather negatively, the absence of it, 'hush'—with the world of soft flowers. In the same poem 'stubbled corn cut by unheeding scythe...the cricket sleeps' presents imagery, even language, which are undoubtedly conscious borrowings from Keats's *Ode to Autumn*. In 'my blood-brother the cricket' she echoes the Wordsworthian perception of close relationship with the meanest of creatures in Nature. Or, in 'once ran...in planetary rhythm' Wordsworth's sense of oneness with Nature is fused into the Metaphysicals' mystic awareness of sharing the universal rhythm, the music of the spheres.

The poem itself is based on the Wordsworthian theme of childhood vision. Childhood was a time when everything was full of meaning for her. She ran through the field, dancing in planetary rhythm. Now Time has no meaning any more. Today, leafed in the memory of a wild wood of past hours, she waits, close-held by the breath of flowers and stone.

The poem starts with the sweet longing note of 'There was a time when meadow...Wither is fled that visionary hour?' of Wordsworth's *Immortality Ode*, but ends with the conventional strain of sadness in the inevitable mutability in the order of things.

* * *

The representation of Nature in Monika Varma's poetry ranges over the whole gamut of Nature treatment in poetry : now purely objective recording, then saturating it with a subjective note, and always lending itself to rich metaphors and moods of personification.

Often than not the purity of simple description of a moment's slice out of the moving scene of Nature is superbly maintained, e.g.

The flight of blue jays
tears a strip of sky
and lays it upon the grass ;
all my fields move from fire to flame.

(*The Flight of Blue Jays*)

—A snap-shot of skyscape and landscape accurately arrested on the sensitive film of a movie camera : Blue jays flying in a cluster the shadow of which falls on the grassy meadow and moves onward across the poet's sixtythree-acre farm in *Krishak Nagar* in Madhya Pradesh.

Or, the poet may attribute a critical mind to a plain picture, e.g.

A dry tree raises its arms to the air
suppliant ;
and the birds chat sitting in judgement.

(*The Flight of Blue Jays*)

The birds chat sitting in judgement over what?—over tearing a strip of the serene sky—or, over the delay in the coming of rains to drench the dry tree? The feeling heart of the poet imposes a story on the objective world, though there is not a human figure anywhere.

But even while introducing human figures into a natural setting, she can hold her sympathising heart in abeyance and let the objective world record its Impressions on the poet's mind untouched by any critical attitude, e.g.

The waters fall back,
waves rise...strike against rocks.
The sea waters rush up rivers,
swell,
pull sea snails and eels,
scrunch wood and metal...
Boatmen square patched sails,
.. boats ride.

(*Tides*)

Equally detached is the functioning of the poet's mind in
the egrets sprinkle a snow-storm.
How beautiful their line of flight,
the positioning of their legs,
and their wings.

(Prose-Poem)

Again, how apparently casual, yet keenly sensitive and deeply conscious,
is the observation of life and death in
an ant struggling on a leaf...
a lizards flat upon his back,
his cold dead belly pale and obscene
in the dawn's tender light.

(Three Phases of Conscious Day)

She is interested rather in the peaceful beauty of Nature where Time
seems to pause and hold his breath :
if you will look there, over there, roses wait, the golden ones,
there, where the winds hold silence and petals do not fall.

(Poem)

Or, the serene painting, music and poetry in
The moon rose dabbling idle fingers into sleeping pools,
Weeds and fringed fishes woke.

(Evening)

In what a perfect unison of spirit does life in the worlds of flora and
fauna respond to phenomenal Nature !

On rare occasions we feel that the poet putting herself into the things
perceived. It is the eternal subjective reading by a poet of objective
nature : In the morning the flying falcon's shrill red call raises the
question—

Will it be the falcon or the dove ?
fierce passion or soft peace ?—

Vexed I answer : Give me love.

(The Question)

—love, passionate or tender, is the poet's wish.

The eternal poetic mind of India, traditionally associating rains, of
all the seasons of the year, with the poetic mood, finds expression in
the little piece, *Rain-days*. It draws a firm sketch of the sky and the
earth in that season : leaden, sulky sky and a blue-grey veil across the
fields ; lightning whips, thunder rumbles anger against hill and plains ;
stars shudder somewhere ; fire-flies dim diamonds in grove ; frogs
raise a cacophony ; bedraggled birds swing on wires, twig and branch ;
the poet indoor absorbed in reading poetry.

Complete self-identification through multiple sense appeal is achieved in the little poem, *Green*. The poetry of green grass we taste here is perhaps unparalleled in world literature. Keats has the cool softness of lush grass beds. But here we feel the total impact of the green grass field on a sensitive poet : its multiple appeal, physical and symbolical : she sucks freshness through all the senses :

Grass is in my mouth, my throat,
grass is on my tongue, my taste
...grass is my love, my touch
The scent of grass green.

Grass represents the rejuvenation of the earth and all living creatures :

Grass ; the deer tear with their sharp
white teeth,
grass ; the earth cries for when it wants to be green.

It is the life-breath of the poet ; there is complete identification of the two :

It is my life, my breath.
...I lay my face against this mountain side
to listen, to hear,
grass drinking the falling dew.

She listens to the sipping of dew-drops by grass-blades : could imagination be bolder ?

The poet realizes the identity of her being with everything that is :

The very dust of this land is me.

Storm and wind, cloud and rain, mist and snow, sun-set and moon-light—

I am all this and more :

Outside and beyond.

(*In Sunlight*)

It is more than an expression of patriotic sentiment : It is the supreme realisation of Indian philosophy, the realization of identity of self with everything that be.

Personification of elements of Nature is the guiding principle in her poetry so often. The mood of the mountain is faithfully caught in

Speech is wrapped in stones,
and the pain of stones is in the breeze
torn from millennial hills.....
Clouds drift caressing these green-clad hills,
and deep, hidden by rock and stone,
cicadas scream. (*Mountain Mood*)

These are personifications on a cosmic scale. Or,
 a sun-painted lime
 plays see-saw with the wind

(Quartered Questions and Queries)

Sun, wind and plant ; vision, motion and mood—personification running through them all : What more does poetry need ?

* * *

Imagery, the primary poetic requisite, in Monika Varma's poetry, is rarely befogged by vague immensities of vision. Her images are always concrete, sharply outlined, and unfailingly relevant to the immediate context, and fully harmonising with mood and expression. 'The shiver of sand' in *The Sea Walked Away* is a complete poem in imagery and articulation and soaked in the right emotional atmosphere. In many a deeply felt sensuous image she evinces her fullest poetic freedom in breaking through the conventional barriers between the senses. In 'a brilliant orchestration of colour' (*Mountain Mood*) the harmonious fusion of varied tunes is used for the perfectly congruous admixture of multiple pigments, an unconscious interchange of colour and sound, of aural and visual impressions.

Different sensations, in the manner of pigments in an artist's palette, easily interplay, one into another. Hence the reader is often shocked at an unexpected association of sensations, as of light and smell in
 awakened by the perfume of the sun. (*The Bahsoli*)

—Morning sun-light, soft yet strong in its effect, affects the poet like perfume does.

In a rare instance quite opposite sensations combine to enrich the totality of experience. Such a happy conglomeration of contraries—sound and silence, restlessness and peace—takes place in

When the ebb tide came, the sea
 Walked away with a rustle and a hush.—

(*The Sea Walked Away*)

the rustle followed by, merging in, the hush.

This tendency to intermingle sensations of different categories also leads to a passionate lover's image being superposed on objects and processes of Nature, e.g.

the sleep-sodden air tears
 with clutching hand roses. (*The Bahsoli*)

The acme is reached when complete fusion of varied strain
 the moon-rays stepped like parallel bars
 up and away in a dancer's tune.

(*It is a Ten O'clock Night*)

—light, movement, music, all are completely blended in the composite imagery. Pure or mixed in character, her images—novel or familiar, old or new—are ever fresh. The poet and her land are old gossips spinning through who knows how many births : she spinning spindles of sunshine into song, and the land weaving a texture of strange patterns (*The Spinners*).

Monika Varma's description of physical aspects of Nature is always supported by a keen colour sense :

The wheat is growing : a sturdy deep-set *green*.
 The days all *green* and *gold*
 and the birds bring the extra colour—
 the jay its *blue*, the barbets
lemon
 amid the *green* leaves.

(*Green Leaves and Gold*)

Her sensitiveness to yellow colour, most abundant in the physical world of Nature, only next to green, is particularly strong. In her observation of Bahsoli paintings in early morning what strikes her most is

Yellow leaping in sunshine.

Yellow, of all the seven colours and their mixtures playing in the sky as the rising sun suddenly leaps up, touches the painter-in-the-poet most refreshingly. If green is the symbol of fresh life, yellow, the colour of gold, represents its full blooming. The poet will pluck the sun from the western horizon, and with it gild everything on earth :

the sun shall make his blinding arc,
 but I shall tear him out of the skies
 and break that splendour into
 grains of sand
 that shall glow *gold*,
 Gold that I shall fling
 around the darkening world,
 and the hills shall turn gold.

(*Gold*)

She sees the gold of dreams and of laughter and invites all, fools and wise people, to join her in the festivity of gold :

Why do you not laugh,
 laugh as the leaves laugh
 strung on boughs
 that burst into the rage
 of the *red-hung* sun
 and all the worlds turn *gold*.

... O give me gold I
the gold of sunlight,
the gold of pollen-drenched
flowers.

—honey-gold words and the pure gold of love.

It is but a step with her for this keen sensitiveness to colours to be
transmuted and merged into a cosmic consciousness :

Jewel gleam of colours take
longing into space.

(*The Bahsoli*)

or,

We who are blind of colour
drawn in the spectrum of our own vision,
We do not see the *reds* and *green*.
We live in spacial *blue*
and glory in the *golden* glow.

(*Spectrum*)

She is keenly sensitive to colours, the specific sense perception,
however, fast fading into cosmic consciousness.

In this process of spiritualization of physical experience colours
acquire symbolic values. The sensation heightens to intensity :

Good love is red

(*The Bahsoli*)

—the natural association of passion with the red of blood that rushes full,
Or,

Krishna's *blue*
rich as dark rain

(*The Bahsoli*)

—the deep blue complexion, as rich or intense as the darkness or
blackness of rain clouds.

In the falcon's "Shrill red call" does 'red' symbolize passion or simply
indicates the intensity of the shrillness ?

Association of human sensations and emotions with colours comes
so easy to her :

rain clouds brushed by paint
grew stylized as pain.

(*The Bahsoli*)

*

*

*

Comparisons, in the form of metaphors and, more frequently, similes
have ever been the recognised mode for the working of poetic
imagination. And poetic comparison, like poetic diction, loses its

efficacy in direct proportion to its tendency to become formalized and conventional. But Monika Varma's comparisons always strike the reader with unfailling freshness because of their unconventionality and unexpectedness. Who could have ever thought of comparing the sun, pale at setting and resplendent at rising, to a girl, occidental and oriental respectively ?

the sun.....

Late in the evening it is yellow,

like a lemon-headed girl from

some European land,

but at dawn...entirely ours, all gold.

(*The Essence of living*)

The strangeness of the comparison becomes effective through a simple process of reversal of the convention of comparing a human figure to a heavenly body. Or, whoever could conceive of such unexpected images for clouds, from just-netted fish to fresh love, from the crudely concrete to the absolutely abstract :

Clouds : pink - orange fish

caught in a silk seine sky,

soft as first love,

promising passion,

as yet all unknown. (*Oddments*)

—a distinctly modern note in the boldness of imaginative association. Or, is the comparison of a winding road to the coil of a girl's hair far-fetched, just linking up a simple sight with a woman's image ?—

The road parts in two ways...

... one ... reaches buses and trucks

... to town and villages ... orchards,

... the other ... winds round the hill

to a pine wood.

... braids of a girl's hair,

one hangs straight, one flung looped

over her shoulder. (*Solan*)

Both object and the image are familiar sights ; the uncommonness is their juxtaposition.

Eerie to is the imagining the pale moonlight, dissolving in darkness as a queer concoction brewing in a witch's cauldron :

The moon mutters —

is it malediction ?

The night is a witch-brew.

(*A witch Brew*)

Or, the comparison of a full river flowing softly to a woman heavy with child moving slow and content :

rivers that flow slow,
content as woman big with child
biding her time.

(*Quartered Questions and Queries*)

What an image : simple and sure ! The feminine world—'braids of hair', 'big with child'—haunts her imagination. Or, to contrast falls of varying weight—very soft, soft, medium, heavy—what apt images are evoked :

Footfall of birds
rain fall waterfall
the silent step of astronauts
on the moon,

(*Counterpoint*)

—What easy absorption of poetic material from a recondite source, the latest scientific progress of man !

*

*

*

The poet's realisation of Life and Death is deep and wide, pragmatic yet transcendental. As she watches children, motor cars, and wind-swept grass, in a moment her vision spreads from childhood to the whole of life, from modernity to eternity :

these are children...
I see eyes swivel, watch, covet,...
slide over men,
walk all over walking girls, women,
walk on shine—smooth hair, limbs,
jewels, clothes, food, the sipped drink,
the screen : hero and heroine, villain and clown,
the policeman, the sycophant, coward and brute,
.....raise slogans,
shout on streets, houses. (*Drongo*)

—a fast-rolling Kaleidoscope whereon the senses glut, the mind works, and imagination weaves and hovers.

The world does not weary, nor its inequities irritate, the spirit of the poet. Youth and age, opulence and poverty, the unending arabesque of light and shade in life, arouse neither political resentment nor philosophic pensiveness in her. They represent an infinite series of rhythmic waves, with crests and depressions, in the poet's vision of life :

What have we to do with farmers
and hoarders of ripe grain in granaries filled to bursting—
the hungry will go on hungering

and the fat men will lurch to their crouch and ease.

What have you and I to do with these ? (*Poem*)

The poet's deep feelings do not yield to flashy sentiments :

The man in the slums...

perhaps a cipher but a cipher without whom

there would be no meaning ..

no love, home. (*Man*)

This is neither a socialist's manifesto against injustice, nor an idealist's sympathy for the poor, but just a poet's reading of life. She has, as P. Lal observes, 'a serene feminine tender humanism that embraces the world of man and beast alike...very Indian...explores the intricate relationships between the creatures of Nature and the creature that is Man...The tensions of such relationships are resolved in the intensity of the sympathy the poet summons for the crane, the dragonfly, the heron, for anything that breathes and grows'. To her life with its varieties and inequalities retains no rational significance : only the rhythm abides :

A horrid rhyme, but rhyme and reason have none,

Only the rhythm remains.

(*Poem*)

The poet's realisation of life is not a tale told by a monster idiot, nor a tale told by angels to worshipping man, but

a curious tale where reality

turns unreal.

(*Poem*)

But love streaming into veins abides :

what is recorded stays. (*Ibid*)

The poet has encountered life from endless angles ; she has had confrontations with Death, and this is her final realisation :

Life is an endless giving.

and Death the greatest giver of them,

(*An Answer*)

*

*

*

Deeply absorbed in feeling and thought, Monika Varma is conscious of the formal and technical aspects of verse. She has full awareness of the medium of language she uses and of the pattern of versification in which she shapes her thoughts and imaginings. She writes her poetry in English out of choice. While writing in English, she assures, she feels 'comfortable' and 'whole' in thinking and expression. As a true-born poet she knows that the flavour of the medium, that is, language, fashions poetry. 'I taste the flavour of words', she confides.

Often she is found making bold experiments in her use of language and verse technique. And her experiments with the medium are always, conscious and significant. For instance, in 'These *establishmented* old men and women' (*The Hostiles*) the backformation from verb to noun and back to verbal use of the new derivative is meaningful. Quite effective too is the free word-derivation in 'Peacock blueness' (*The Broken Poem*). And with rare felicity she makes even the very typographical arrangement highly suggestive of the relative physical phenomena. In the poem, *clouds*,

Kajal black clouds presaging both storm
and
rain
rain
rain
rain
rain

is a typical example. In the storm rain falling slanted : then, as the wind stops rain falls vertically in showers.

Through all the media available—words, imagery, rhythm, lay-out—the poet's heart cries for the power of expression, to image forth her visions and realizations :

I need words...
that speak from one loneliness to another.

(*I need words*)

She needs the language of direct, inspired communication from soul to soul, from the poet to her reader. And she gets it.

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INVOCATION TO THE MUSES AS A BASIS OF MILTON'S THEORY OF POETRY

R. K. SEN

Milton was not as vocal as Dryden in defending his practice as a creative artist. Critics have seized upon his scattered statements, and attempted to find a rational basis of his creation from the *Comus*—*Lycidas* period through *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* to *Samson Agonistes*. Understandably, no one critical position can explain such a range and variety of creative output. Leaving aside the critics' biographical approach to the poet by Raleigh,¹ Pattison² and Saurat,³ we have still a choice between the classical approach of Parker,⁴ the structural approach of Helen Gardner,⁵ the theological by C.S. Lewis,⁶ and the doctrinal by B. Rajan.⁷ With all these possible approaches to the poet, it is not clear if the essence of Milton's poetry has been explained.

We may as well start with Coleridge's "Milton had a highly imaginative, Cowley a very fanciful mind". It is not relevant to the present enquiry to discuss, with Eliot, if Coleridge exercises "an irrational persuasion upon the mind of the reader".⁸ Coleridge discovered in Milton anticipations of his own theory of imagination.⁹ But Coleridge was temperamentally shut out from Milton's world. An attempt at a reconstruction of Milton's poetic theory on the basis of Coleridge's doctrine or imagination will necessarily be equally suspected.

But Coleridge brought together Milton and Cowley for other reasons, not appreciated by Eliot. Coleridge knew Cowley's *Davideis* and justifiably thought that Milton succeeded while Cowley failed as they attempted to do the same or, parallel thing, the choice of identical subject, the epic of David. Coleridge was not the first to note this parallel between Milton and Cowley. Dr. Johnson had already noted and the award has gone to Milton.¹⁰ Then there is among post-Coleridgean critics, Walter Raleigh, who draws attention to the great difference between Milton and Cowley. "What dangers he (Milton) escaped may be well seen in Cowley's *Davideis* which fell into them all. This is how Cowley describes the attiring of his Gabriel, who is commissioned to bear a message to David—

He took for skin a cloud most soft and bright,
That e'er the midday Sun' pierced through with light :

...
...

This he with starry vapours spangles all,
Took in their Prime ere they grow ripe and fall,—

—and so on. The whole business suggests the anxiety of Pigwiggin ; or the intricacies of Belinda's toilet in the *Rape of the Lock*. Milton was not in the least likely to fall into the fantastic—familiar vein.¹¹ As already noted, three critics voicing the critical position of three respective periods, Dr. Johnson for the eighteenth, Coleridge for the Romantic Revival and Walter Raleigh for the Georgian, were convinced of the strikingly parallel and at the same time sharp difference—parallelism in the choice of theme and difference in treatment,—between Milton and Cowley. Eliot is only summing up a tradition, which started with Dr. Johnson and was very much alive even in the first decade of the twentieth century.

II

"The Invocation to the Muses" might be taken as the basis of an enquiry into Milton's aesthetics. "The Invocation to the Muses" at the opening of the poem is the epic poet's way of declaring the importance and the truth of his subject. He is going to relate what the Muse has revealed, Epic poetry must always make this claim, it is not fiction, it is true and it is important. But the Muse that Milton invokes is not one of the Nine, although She bears the name, as we learn in the Prologue to Book VII—of the classical Muse of astronomy, Urania. It is the "Heavenly Muse" that Milton invokes, the Muse of sacred song and of prophecy, who inspired the poets and prophets of Israel, the Muse of divine inspiration who was before the world began, sister of the Eternal wisdom who played with her before the throne of the Eternal Father. Milton's Muse is the source of all human knowledge of divine things and of human power to utter them.¹²

Gardner analyses the complex pattern and interplay of different ideas underlying the Invocation. 'Milton invokes his Muse first as inspirer of the Muses who, in forty days and nights—when he was alone on Mount Sinai, hidden in cloud, was thought to have learned not only the law but also those secrets of creation that he revealed in *Genesis*. Then he invokes her as haunting the Waters of Siloah that flow beneath Mount Sinai on which stood the Temple that contained the "Oracle of God", the Ark of Covenant, the sign of God's perpetual Presence with his

people.....Two mountains of revelation are set before us : Sinai, where in cloud and storm Moses received a special revelation, and Sion, where God tabernacled with men, to be found by those who sought him. Inspiration is given unsought to those who are called to receive it. It is also to be sought where God has promised that it shall be found.¹³

Gardner emphasizes that the pagan Muse is not acceptable to John Milton. 'One might say paradoxically that the address to the Muse is a convention with the pagan poets Homer and Virgil, but with the Christian Milton it is not. Has she then a metaphysical reality? Does Milton believe intellectually in the existence of a Heavenly Muse, as men have believed in angels or as the Neo-Platonist believed in "emanations", mediatory spiritual beings between the divine and the human in the scale of being? I think we must reject this Milton too.'¹⁴ Gardner accepts the Christian doctrine of the Oracle, or "Inspiration", rejects Neo-Platonic emanation and hastens to find parallel between Milton's Muse and Wordsworth's "powers"! 'Through his invocation of her he declares that Inspiration is a reality, not a subjective fancy. She is the poetic embodiment of Milton's belief in his vocation, no more a convention than those "Powers" that haunt the poetry of Wordsworth'.¹⁵ Gardner quotes from *The Prelude*, Book VI in defence of her thesis that Milton, as much as Wordsworth, must be judged as "pure poets", leaning heavily on "Powers" or "imagination". Earlier Gardner characteristically writes, 'He (Milton) was not writing a work of Christian apologetics on the one hand or a symbolic novel on the other. He was writing an epic poem, re-telling the best-known story in the world, and a story whose main meaning and import he did not have to establish'.¹⁶

Gardner shares the twentieth-century antipathy to Milton's theological beliefs.¹⁷ This explains her changed critical perspective—her attempted interpretation of Milton as "pure poet". "Pure" poetry is not incompatible with Christian theology or Christian heterodoxy. The "Invocation to the Muses" shows how brilliantly the two have been synthesized in *Paradise Lost*,

III

Two recent Milton enthusiasts, B. Rajan and Helen Gardner, have attempted to read in Milton's *Paradise Lost* a re-affirmation of this heterodoxy—Milton's Arianism in *De Doctrina Christina*.¹⁸ Gardner is equally emphatic in suggesting that *Paradise Lost* is not primarily or even specifically Christian. 'The great points at issue between the different confessions, turning on the doctrine of Atonement, the relation

of faith and works, Church order, and the nature of the Sacraments, are marginal to the true subject of *Paradise Lost*. And if we think of seventeenth century religious writing we must be struck by how little some of the great seventeenth century topics are reflected in Milton's poetry. The sense of sin, the need for salvation, the shudder at death, the fear of judgement and the hope of resurrection—these are not themes that receive grand expression in *Paradise Lost*¹⁹. But Milton is as thoroughly religious and Christian as any other seventeenth century poet or theological controversialist? Donne, Vaughan or Sir Thomas Browne, provided we accept Milton's brand of Christianity, his Puritanism, his Arianism, or *De Doctrina Christina* as enunciation of his religious faith. There is no basic incompatibility between Milton's "private" faith and his attitude to the Muses. Indeed, Milton's attitude to poetry can never be understood without a reference to his "private" faith, his Arianism or whatever it may mean.

We may as well begin this analysis of Milton's Muse, with

What In me is dark

Illumine, what is low raise and support

(*Paradise Lost* I, 22-5)

If *Paradise Lost* begins with a prayer with "its briefer clauses, simpler syntax and solemn balance",²⁰ *Samson Agonistes* closes with a firm assurance :

"But he though blind of sight,
Despis'd and thought extinguish't quite,
With inward eyes illuminated
His fierie vertue rouz'd
From under ashes into sudden flame."

(1687-91)

If *Paradise Lost* had been taken up in 1658 and *Samson Agonistes* were finished by 1671,²¹ it is evident that Milton had been deeply interested in the doctrine of "illumination" for about a quarter of a century, in the most formative period of his poetic life. If Milton's prose works be taken into consideration, the doctrine of "illumination" can be traced as early as 1641 to his *Of Reformation in England*,²² as late as 1660 to *De Doctrina Christina*²³ and even to *Of True Religion. Heresy, Schism, Toleration*,²⁴ written a year before his death, in 1673. Milton's *Areopagitica* published in 1644, defends "inspiration" more than "illumination", even though in his later life, "illumination" became Milton's poetic creed. Solomon and "other inspired authors" are defended²⁵; "light",²⁶ "fountain itself of heavenly radiance"²⁷ are mentioned, but as yet, "light" or "illumination" is not central to Milton's aesthetic speculations. *Areopagitica* is evenly balanced between

Davidian "inspiration" and]the doctrine of "illumination" the emphasis slowly shifting to "illumination" in the sixties, which saw the production of *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes*.

IV

It has not occurred either to Rajan or to Gardner, that Milton's heterodoxy need not be searched for in his private faith, his Puritanism, or Arianism, or whatever it may be. The heterodoxy of Milton as a poet is to be primarily discovered in his defence of "illumination" rather than "inspiration". Davidian "inspiration", the orthodox poetic creed is firmly rejected ; and by the time he came to write *Paradise Lost*, Milton had already accepted 'illumination' as the basis of his aesthetics. In other words, Milton's Muse is precisely what Gardner denies her to be : Milton's Muse is as much a pagan convention as the Homeric or Virgilian Muse ; she is a Neo-Platonic emanation, a mediatory spiritual being between the divine and the human in the scale of being (vide Sec.V). The textual evidence in defence of Gardner's theory of Milton's "inspiration" is unfortunately very little. Neither in the first Invocation (Bk 1, lines 1-26) nor in the second (Bk. VII lines 1-40) there is any reference to the poet's desire to be "inspired" by the Muse. Though the first Invocation refers to the Heavenly Muse,,

Sing Heav'nly Muse, that on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst *inspire*
That Shepherd (Bk 1, 6-8)

she is not the one, who is Milton's Muse Milton's Muse "illuminates" the dark: "what in me is dark/illumine" (Bk 1, 22-3), The first twenty-three lines of *Paradise Lost* Bk.1.sums up the history of a poet's soul—the poet turning away from the Davidian Muse of "inspiration", and accepting the Muse of "illumination". This interpretation of the Invocation in Bk.1 is perfectly compatible with the evidence in hand from the prose works of John Milton, particularly with his *Of Reformation in England* and *De Doctrina Christina* (vide sec. III). Milton explains the nature of his Muse in *Paradise Lost* Bk. VII. She is the Heavenly Urania (line 1) ; She is not one of the nine Muses (lines 5-6). On the other hand,

Thou with Eternal wisdom didst converse,
Wisdom thy sister, and with her didst play
In Presence of the Almighty Father. Pleas'd
With thy Celestial Song.

(*Paradise Lost* Bk VII 9-12)

That she is not a pagan Muse is abundantly clear from the first forty lines

of Book VII. The first Invocation shows that Milton's "Muse" is not the Davidian "Muse" of inspiration ; the second Invocation shows that she is, once again, not the pagan Muse of

Of Bacchus and his Revellers, the Race
Of that wilde Rout that tore the Thracian Bard
In Rhodope.

(*Paradise Lost*, Bk VII 33-5)

As already noted, the first Invocation rules out "inspiration" by the Muse, and defends "illumination" : the second Invocation rules out the pagan Muse of "Bacchus and his Revellers". It has not been noted by critics that the rejection of Bacchus and his revellers is immediately preceded by Milton's continuing interest in "illumination". Urania becomes the Muse of light or "illumination". Milton "implores" (Bk. VII line 38) her to help him sing

... with mortal voice, unchang'd
To hoarse or mute, though fall'n on evil days,
On evil days though fall'n, and evil tongues :
In darkness, and with dangers compass'd round,
And solitude ; yet not alone, while thou
Visit'st my slumbers Nightly, or when Moon
Purples the East : still govern thou my Song,
Urania, and fit audience find, though few.

(*Paradise Lost*, Bk. VII 24-31)

The Invocation to light, with which Book III opens, assumes unusual importance in the context of the Invocation to the Muse, first in Bk I and afterwards in Bk VII. As already noted, the dissociation of the Davidian Muse from the Muse of Illumination is evident in Bk. I ; there is a second dissociation, now of the Muse of Illumination from the Bacchic Muse in Bk VII. The Invocation to light in Bk III is thus the invocation to the Muse of Illumination ; It is an affirmation of the central creed of Miltonic aesthetics.

V

It has been noted that Milton's Arianism led him to a theological position, which may be described as a variant of Neo-Platonism. The suggestion that the Redeemer was a "mere man" had horrified Eusebius ; but the question arose, if this was not the case, what then was He ? To this question Arius, Presbyter of Alexandria, was now to attempt an answer.⁸⁸ The object of Arius was to rebut a contention recently put forward by Sabellius that the "Son" was a mere "power" or "function" (*energeia*) of the Father ; in other words, that there were

no substantial distinctions within the three so-called "persons" ('prosopa') of the Trinity being simply three different modes of divine action. In answer to Sabellius, Arius invoked the notion of an ultimate principle, in itself simple but all-inclusive, the "Monad" which, in the language of Neo-Platonism, was "beyond knowledge and beyond existence". To this principle, Arius ascribed the genesis of all creatures, including that of the logos, who was thus described as "of another substance" from the Father and of whom it could be said that "there was a time when he did not exist." It was further argued that the logos owed his origin, not to any Inherent necessity, but to a free and voluntary act on the part of the Father whose creature he was. As a creature in time the logos was theoretically subject to change (=treptos, alloitos). His divinity, therefore, was not substantial, but acquired by merit, and, if he possessed the wisdom (sophia) and power (dynamis) of the Father, it was simply by "participation" in them (=metache). In other words, he was a typical "intermediate being" of Neo-Platonic theology, neither "very God" nor "very man" but, through the Spirit which he in turn was believed to engender, a "link" between the two.

To a student of Milton's theory of poetry, a study of his angelology, is doubly significant. Pseudo-Dionysius is as certain as Plato or Apuleius that God encounters Man only through a "Mean" and reads his own philosophy into scripture as freely as Chalcidius had read his into the Timaeus. He cannot deny that Theophanies, direct appearances of God Himself to Patriarchs and Prophets, seem to occur in the Old Testament. But he is quite sure that this never really happens. These visions were in reality mediated through celestial but created beings "as though the order of the divine law laid it down that creatures of a lower order should be moved God-ward by those of a higher", that the order of the divine law does so enjoin is one of his key-conceptions. His God does nothing directly that can be done through intermediaries. Devolution or delegation, a finely graded descent of power and goodness, is the universal principle. The Divine splendour (illustratio) comes to us filtered, as it were through the Hierarchies,

It must not be forgotten that Milton in the *Invocation to Muses* (Bk 1 lines 1-26) is defending not one but two critical positions, often at conflict with each other, Gardner has noted this conflict, but has no answer. "From the Muse of Sinai and of Sion Milton turns to pray to the Spirit, and I suppose everyone who reads this Prelude to the poem must be struck by the contrast between the tone and rhythms of the first sixteen lines—one great rolling sentence with suspended verbs, culminating in the tremendous aspiration to pursue.

Things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhime—
and the tone and rhythms of the Prayer that follows, with its briefer
clauses, simpler syntax, and solemn balance :

What in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support;

and

I may assert eternal Providence
And justify the ways of God to man;

The Invocation to the Muse is full of confidence and daring and this same note recurs in the prologues to Books III and VII when the Heavenly Muse is again invoked. The prayer to the Spirit is a genuine prayer, rooted as all prayer must be in humility,"³⁰ In lines 22-3 Milton is definitely moving to a new theory of poetry, compatible with his Protestant beliefs, his Arianism, and its roots in Neo-Platonic philosophy.

VI

Denis Saurat³⁰ long before H.J.C. Grierson³¹ and C. S. Lewis³² had discovered Milton's indebtedness to St. Augustine, Saurat confines himself to the analysis of Milton's use of Christ symbolism, which he claims, is "warranted by Augustine's authority." Grierson discovers a more pervasive Augustinian influence in *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*. Two characters in Old Testament history caused considerable trouble to Christian moralists. They were Jephtha, who slew his own daughter, and Samson who committed suicide... In his (Milton's) answer he follows St. Augustine, to whom the difficulty had been especially troublesome because he was busy combating the Roman and Stoical commendation of suicide. *Mors voluntaria* is, he contends, forbidden to Christians. What then of Samson? His answer is that Samson can only be excused on the ground that he acted under the direct inspiration and guidance of God. It is not of course Samson's suicide that is the interest of the story for Milton, though in the final chorus he uses St. Augustine's phrase, *mors voluntaria*, in disclaiming any such possible accusation"³³ In defence of his thesis, Grierson refers to the Argument of *Samson Agonistes*. "Samson is required to play before the Lords and People": he at first refuses, dismissing the Publick Officer with absolute denial to come: at length persuaded inwardly that this was from God, he yields to go along with him, who came now the second time with great threatenings to fetch him..."³⁴ Lewis traces Milton's Augustinianism to the poet's concept of hierarchy. As already noted, though Saurat, Grierson and Lewis are agreed that Milton is Augustinian, they have little to say on the relation of Milton's Augustinianism to Milton's attitude to the Muses.

There has been in recent years more detailed survey of Milton's Augustinianism. Professor Maurice Kelley's comprehensive survey of Milton's dogma in 1941, maintains that *Paradise Lost* is an Arian document.³⁵ Rajan does not dispute Kelley's findings but argues whether Milton's Arianism is essential to the understanding of the poem. "Collate *Paradise Lost* with *De Doctrina* and it is Arian. It could hardly be otherwise in the nature of Milton's integrity. But read as it was meant to be read, by itself, as an epic poem, not a systematic theology, and the heresy fades in a background of incantation...He cannot make his heresy irrelevant. But he tries very hard to make it incidental."³⁶ It is not much Milton as Rajan, who tries hard to make the heresy peripheral. Correctly analysed the Invocation to the Muses is as much Augustinian as Arian, the common basis of the two is a deeply shared belief in the doctrine of Illumination.

VII

It has been suggested that Milton's Muse is not classical but Davidian, "In the seventh century and the Germanic North, we again find a rigorous rejection of the Pagan Muse : in Aldhelm...Aldhelm, then combines the rejection of the Muses with patristic "Biblical poetics". Balaam's ass (Numbers 22:27) is cited as proof that Jehovah can bestow eloquence—a motif which has already appeared in Sedulius, and which became very popular later. Linking poetic theory with the Old Testament, one of the results of patristic Biblical exegesis, struck deeper roots in England than in any other country. It exhibits a continuity from which the conclusion may be drawn that England, and even Saxon England, was especially receptive to the poetry of the Old Testament."³⁷ Milton in his Invocation to the Muses as much as Bunyan in *The Author's Apology to Pilgrim's Progress*, take their stand on Biblical poetics. Milton's Davidian muse was made acceptable not merely as a result of patristic Biblical exegesis, as suggested by Curtius, but also because of a more important popular demand : everyone "knew throughout the Renaissance—that the past contained Nine worthies : three Pagans ; three Jews (Jeshew, David and Judas Maccabæus) ; and three Christians."³⁸ But this is only one aspect of Milton's attitude to poetry. As already noted, this attitude was powerfully conditioned by Milton's continuing interest in Arianism, Anabaptism and Illuminism in general.

"What in me is dark/illumine" is not a "prayer made in humility". The popular character of the Davidian Muse is completely acceptable to Bunyan ; but a Cambridge classicist must discover in Davidian Muse

something to satisfy not merely his scholarly instinct, but also his polemical Puritanism. Puritanism is a religion of conscience.' 'With good cause, therefore, it is the general consent of all sound protestant writers, that neither traditions, councils nor canons of any visible church, much less edicts of any magistrate or civil session, but the scripture only, can be the final judge or rule in matters of religion, and that only in the conscience of every Christian to himself...For if the church be not sufficient to be implicitly believed, as we held it is not, what can there else be named of more authority than the church but the conscience, than which God only is greater?'³⁹ Again, "there is no man so wicked but at sometimes his conscience wring him with thoughts of another world, and the peril of his soul; the trouble and melancholy, which he conceives of true repentance and amendment, he endures not, but inclines to some carnal superstition, which may pacify and lull his conscience with some more pleasing doctrine."⁴⁰ It is interesting to note that if in the first passage Milton defends the religion of conscience, in the second, he associates the religion of conscience with such Protestant sects, as Anabaptists, Arians, Ariminians and Socinians.⁴¹ What is even more important is that Anabaptists, Arians, Ariminians, Socinians, and the religion of conscience are different forms of Illuminist philosophy. Recent studies of seventeenth century Puritanism have indicated its intimate association with the Illumination or Alumbraders.⁴² Bremond would rather identify Illuminism as a semi-Reformation movement, perhaps due to the influence of Erasmus, which had been driven underground, and so turned into a sect. This brings us to a highly anomalous attitude: an orthodox Davidian Muse garbed in a heterodox illuminist philosophy. Milton, more than any other, was acutely conscious of this anomaly.

In the heated controversy on Trinitarianism in Restoration England, Milton was no passive spectator. First, he defended Arianism,⁴³ the defence of Arianism comes immediately after his defence of the Anabaptists.⁴⁴ Theologically, Arianism and Anabaptism are not differentiated by Milton. The development of the young Arianist Milton into the mature Augustinian poet has a more interesting history. The Ranters and the Seekers are the seventeenth century spokesman of the cult of Illuminism. It should be remembered that Athanasius was mainly interested in the revelation of the Trinity in its first and second "persons"; it remained largely for the western theologians to develop the implications of the third hypostasis in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. St. Ambrose, repeatedly referred to in Milton's theological writings,⁴⁵ shifts the emphasis from the second to the third hypostasis of the Trinity. He is the bridge, which makes the transition from Arianism to Augustinianism possible for John

Milton. The Arianist Illuminism, disguised and clothed as Augustinian orthodox theological position, thus becomes the basis of a Miltonic theory of poetry. There is no question as insinuated by Rajan, of a supposed Miltonic attempt to play down his heresy. His poetry as much as his heresy, are equally genuine ; His poetry is rooted and thrives in his heresy. This will explain the importance of the Invocation to the Muses, The Invocation is, by far the most conscious and systematic expression of Milton's Illuminism, a theologico-literary attitude to which Milton was moving, from his early sympathy and association with Arianism, Anabaptism, Trinitarianism, school of Ranters Seekers and lastly with Augustinianism.

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MILTON'S SIGNIFICANCE FOR US

VISVANATH CHATTERJEE

Milton is one of the sublimest of poets. The eulogistic words used by Dante in his *Inferno* in connexion with Virgil—'Onorate l'altissimo poeta' ('Honour to him of poets loftiest!')—are equally applicable to Milton. Too often has Milton been praised, and by too eminent a band of critics, for me to attempt to weave another garland on the occasion of the tercentenary of his death. Yet I can hardly refrain from doing that when I look at him—at a distance of long three hundred years—and find him as significant to us as ever.

T. S. Eliot, writing on the occasion of the tercentenary of the death of John Donne, refers to writers whom we love without admiring and writers whom we admire without loving. In the case of Milton, as in the case of Shakespeare, I think there is the rare instance of a great writer whom we can love as well as admire. At least this is the experience of one common reader of Milton, and he can express himself freely because he is not required to have a special licence for saying anything on Milton, the kind of special licence which Sir Leslie Stephen postulated in the case of those who wanted to write about Shakespeare.

II

The Elizabethan age and the seventeenth century believed in a hierarchy governing all aspects of life and nature. You violate the hierarchy, and chaos is come again. But is there any absolute hierarchy in literature? We can group sportsmen in their ranks and orders with the help of sports statistics; we have our seeded players in tennis. It is often difficult, if not impossible, to determine seeded poets—England's No. 1 or No. 2 in poetry, for instance. Our estimate of Milton's greatness need not make us enter into the futile exercise of placing him higher or lower than Shakespeare. Moreover, the 'myriad-minded' Shakespeare is *sui generis*—a class apart. As Browning suggested in his poem, 'The Names':

Shakespeare!—to such names sounding, what succeeds
Fitly as silence?

But, then, a comparison of Milton with Shakespeare is instructive in so far as it helps us to realize that these two writers are not *samānadharmā* or 'kindred spirits'. Some poets are 'sun-treaders' and, like Goethe's

Eternal Feminine, always draw us upward. They are Virgil, Dante, and Milton. There are others who hold the mirror up to nature and make us know and love life more intimately. They are Homer, Chaucer, and Shakespeare.

Shakespeare is the mirror reflecting the world while Milton is the lamp illuminating it. This, however, did not prevent Milton from being deeply influenced by Shakespeare, and it is not for nothing that Shakespeare and Milton are often coupled together, as in Wordsworth's sonnet on British freedom :

We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakespeare spake ; the faith and morals hold
Which Milton held.

It is interesting to note that Milton's first published work was a poem on Shakespeare—'An Epitaph on the admirable Dramatick Poet, W. Shakespeare'. This sixteen-line epigram in heroic couplets appeared in the Second Folio (1632) of Shakespeare's works and developed two ideas already made familiar by Ben Jonson—Shakespeare as 'a monument without a tomb' and Shakespeare as a child of nature rather than of art. This second idea is reiterated in his 'L' Allegro' where 'sweetest Shakespeare' is described as 'Fancy's child' and warbling 'his native wood-notes wild'. There are direct references to Shakespeare in Milton's prose work and, in his poetry, there are numerous verbal echoes as well as a number of episodes which suggest the influence of Shakespeare. For instance, Satan's intrigue against Adam and Eve is reminiscent of Iago's intrigue against Othello and Desdemona.

As a matter of fact, *Paradise Lost* is sometimes marked by a remarkable dramatic quality, and for this Milton was indebted to the Elizabethan masters, especially Shakespeare. It may be recalled here that there was a time in Milton's life when he toyed with the idea of writing his great poem in the dramatic form. Near about 1641 Milton drew up a list of ninety-nine possible subjects for the *magnum opus* that he had been contemplating. In this list (still preserved in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge) there were as many as four drafts or schemes for a work to be called *Paradise Lost* or *Adam Unparadised*. Two of these were lists of characters or *dramatis personae*, but the other two were abstracts of plots for a drama. Modern critics have rightly discarded the earlier theory that Milton had no dramatic power. After all, he was the author of the most famous masque in English literature, *Comus*, and the most successful imitation of Greek tragedy in English, *Samson Agonistes*. E.M.W. Tillyard in *The English Epic and its Background* (1954) and Kester Svendsen in *Milton and Science* (1956) have offered

us new appreciation of the drama of Adam and Eve's dissension and reconciliation in Books IX and X of *Paradise Lost*. And even the last two Books of the epic—which have generally been dismissed as artistic failure—have been vindicated by Lawrence A. Sasek in his essay entitled 'The Drama of *Paradise Lost*, Books XI and XII' (1962).

III

Coming back to our earlier point, we may say that, leaving Shakespeare out of account, Milton may indeed be said to hold an indisputable place at the head of English poets. Perhaps it is hasty to corroborate the phrase 'an indisputable place'. Milton's supremacy has never been undisputed; it has always been questioned by some critic or other, on one pretext or another. The fact remains, however, that Milton is a great poet in every sense of the epithet. Even Dr. Johnson, who at one time popularized such foolish shibboleths as Miltons 'Turkish contempt for women', could not help taking into account the colossal scale of Milton's achievement in his *Lives of the English Poets* :

The characteristic quality of his poem is sublimity. He sometimes descends to the elegant, but his element is the great. He can occasionally invest himself with grace; but his natural port is gigantic loftiness. He can please when pleasure is required; but it is his peculiar power to astonish.

The Himalayan heights reached by Milton have been more readily appreciated by poets rather than ordinary readers. To the ordinary reader Milton is one of those eminent poets like his illustrious predecessor, Edmund Spenser, who are only paid lip-service. This is perhaps to be expected, since an aristocratic poet like Milton cannot be a popular poet in any narrow sense. His poetry can never please the million; it is caviare to the general. Milton himself realised this much and that is why he prayed to his Muse thus at the beginning of Book VI of *Paradise Lost* :

...still govern thou my song,

Urania, and fit audience find, though few.¹

In more senses than one, Milton was a poet's poet. He did have a considerable influence on the English poets succeeding him and many of them have handsomely acknowledged this fact, notwithstanding the occasional noises made by confirmed Miltonoclasts like an Ezra Pound here or a T. S. Eliot there. Some of the greatest things ever said by one poet of another have been said about Milton. Dryden, for instance, writes in his poem on 'Lines under the Portrait of Milton' :

Three poets, in three distant Ages born,

Greece, Italy, and England did adorn.
 The first in loftiness of thought surpass'd,
 The next in majesty, in both the last :
 The force of nature could no farther go ;
 To make the third she join'd the former two.

Wordsworth in his well-known sonnet, 'London, 1802', is no less ecstatic :

Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart ;
 Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea :
 Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free.

And then there is that eloquent passage in Tennyson's poem on Milton :
 O Mighty-Mouth'd inventor of harmonies,
 O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,
 God-gifted organ-voice of England,
 Milton, a name to resound for ages.

The name of Milton has been actually resounding for ages. Attempts, nevertheless, have been made, by the so-called critical debunkers, to dethrone Milton from his high pedestal, especially in the twentieth century. Some of them would even go so far as to suggest that in the preceding generation there was not only actual 'dislodgement' of Milton, it was effected 'with surprisingly little fuss'. This, of course, is a clear case of wishful thinking. Three hundred years is a pretty long time and Milton is too securely fixed to be swayed by the winds doctrine or changes in fashion. But it has to be admitted that one of the fiercest literary debates of our time has centred round Milton and it has now come to be known as 'the Milton Controversy'. The attack on Milton as a harmful influence in English verse was begun by T. S. Eliot, who took the cue from his one-time mentor, Ezra Pound, In 'A Note on the Verse of John Milton', contributed to *Essays and Studies* (1936), Eliot began with a kind of pontifical solemnity and an ill-concealed sarcastic undertone :

While it must be admitted that Milton is a very great poet
 Indeed, it is something of a puzzle to decide in what his
 greatness consists. On analysis, the marks against him appear
 both more numerous and more significant than the marks to
 his credit.

A little later, in the same essay, Eliot brings in serious charges against Milton in respect of what Eliot thought the peculiar kind of deterioration to which Milton subjected language. Then after a great deal of phrase-mongering Eliot comes to the revealing conclusion that 'Milton writes English like a dead language'. The deep sea has its limits but critical bravado apparently has none !

Incidentally we may note that Eliot had more influence on the Bengali writers of this century than Milton had on their predecessors. There was a time when a number of Arjuns in Bengal played the sedulous ape to Eliot's Krishna and one of them, Buddhadeva Bose, even went to the extent of denouncing Michael Madhusudan Dutt in a precisely Eliotesque manner when he described the greatness of the celebrated Bengali epic poet as the most flagrant myth and most deep-rooted superstition.

T. S. Eliot attempted to modify his stand subsequently when he chose Milton as the subject for the Henriette Hertz Lecture, delivered to the British Academy on 26 March 1947. This lecture is quite a masterpiece of recantation—as glaring as Eliot's change of stand on the issue of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. But even when revising his views, Eliot fails to avoid critical confusion. He makes too rigid a distinction, as Dame Helen Gardner has also noted, between dramatic and non-dramatic verse, and Shakespeare and Milton have been rather uncereemoniously coupled together as poets to be escaped from. To make a long story short, Eliot's attack on Milton was continued by F.R. Leavis and others. But if these critics are Miltonoclasts, there is no lack of Miltonolaters either, who include J.B. Broadbent, David Daiches, Helen Gardner, Frank Kermode, C.S. Lewis, Kenneth Muir, and E.M.W. Tillyard, to name only a few of them. Perhaps in recent times more books have been written on Milton than on any other English poet—excluding, of course, Shakespeare. The 'Milton Controversy' seems to have developed—or is 'degenerated' the word?—into a kind of 'Milton Industry'.

IV

Milton's reputation, which by this time is secure enough, was a slow process, and he was not a very famous poet in his own lifetime. He did not, like Byron after the publication of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, wake up one morning to find himself famous. Milton's major poems, and the second edition of his minor poems, were published during the Restoration age—a period which was hostile to Milton's poetic faith as well as political ideology. In this age Denham and Waller were supposed to be innovators in the realm of poetry and Etherege and Wycherley were popular dramatists. Many of the typical writers of the period were totally unsympathetic to Milton but Dryden, who stood head and shoulders above his other contemporaries, could appreciate Milton's greatness as a poet in spite of the fact that he did not approve

of Milton's politics. And that Dryden was not alone in his admiration of Milton's poetry is borne out by the reassuring fact that a second edition of Milton's *Paradise Lost* was published in Milton's own lifetime and that in course of seven years.

In the next century Milton found an eloquent champion in Addison who, in a series of papers in *The Spectator*, discussed and illustrated the excellences of *Paradise Lost* while he was engaged in an examination of Milton's poem by the rules of epic poetry. Milton, according to Addison, has carried the English language 'to a greater height than any of the English poets have ever done before or after him, and made the sublimity of his style equal to that of his sentiments.' Addison's essays signally contributed to the growing fame of our poet and in the eighteenth century there were a large number of poets who were conscious imitators of Milton. It is no fault of Milton or his poetry that many of these imitators failed to imitate Milton successfully and introduce 'the answerable style' in their poetical works. But the authors of a number of notable longer poems of the eighteenth century were inspired by Milton when they chose blank verse as their medium. These poems include James Thomson's *Seasons*, Robert Blair's *The Grave* and the somewhat similar *Night Thoughts* of Edward Young, Mark Akenside's *The Pleasures of Imagination* and William Cowper's *The Task*. And Milton's influence is apparent as much in the poetic language as in the blank verse. Another poet of this century on whom Milton exerted considerable influence was William Blake, who entitled one of his final symbolic works *Milton*. In this poem Blake makes Milton return from eternity to correct the error for which he was responsible and enter into Blake, who propagates the Christian ideal of Jesus, self-sacrifice and loving forgiveness.

The Romantics in the nineteenth century, under the leadership of Wordsworth and Coleridge, were up in arms against what Wordsworth branded as poetic diction. Although Milton, no less than Dryden or Pope, could be criticized for a somewhat artificial phraseology, the Romantics, by and large, had nothing but admiration for Milton. They were influenced by him to a considerable extent. Apart from the 'London, 1802' sonnet, Wordsworth also refers to Milton eulogistically elsewhere. There is, for instance, that brilliant passage in Wordsworth's sonnet on the Sonnet :

...and, when a damp
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
The thing became a trumpet, whence he blew
Soul-animating strains—alas, too few !

Wordsworth's *Excursion* is steeped in Miltonic influence and his *Prelude*

would have been much less sonorous had it not been for the same influence.

Coleridge's lecture on Milton is brilliant and he emphasized the artificial and musical qualities of Milton's poetry. In his own poetry Coleridge constantly chose Milton as a model. As Allan Grant rightly points out (*A Preface to Coleridge*, 1972), Milton comes at Coleridge in a special way, quite apart from the continuous and conscious references to and echoes of him throughout Coleridge's poetry, and that is by way of the eighteenth-century tradition of the ode. The ode, we know, is a favourite genre of Coleridge's.

The technical excellence of Milton's verse and the subtlety of Milton's style were also forcefully pointed out by Byron, Shelley, Keats, Lamb and Hazlitt. Milton's influence on their creative writings was commensurate with their eloquent praise of him. Shelley praises Milton in *A Defence of Poetry* and devotes one of the most memorable stanzas of his elegy, *Adonais*, almost entirely to Milton :

... .. He died
Who was the sire of an immortal strain,
... .. but his clear sprite

Yet reigns o'er earth, the third among the sons of light.

The eponymous hero of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* is clearly modelled on Milton's Satan.

Keats was under Milton's spell when he composed the first version of his *Hyperion* and left the poem incomplete because he thought there was something too much of this. He explained this in his letter dated 21 September 1819 :

I have given up *Hyperion*—there were too many Miltonic inversions in it—Miltonic verse cannot be written but in an artful or rather artist's humour. I wish to give myself up to other sensations. ... I have but lately stood on my guard against Milton. Life to him would be death to me.

This same Keats had, however, written only about a month earlier :

I am convinced more and more every day that (excepting the human friend Philosopher) a fine writer is the most genuine Being in the World. Shakespeare and the *Paradise Lost* every day become greater wonders to me.

I wish we had another Middleton Murry to write a book entitled *Keats and Milton*. Keats's affinity with Milton, the extent of the Miltonic influence on him, and Keats's ambivalence towards Milton, have, I believe, not yet been adequately explored.

Of the Victorian writers, apart from Tennyson, there were Arnold and Hopkins who were admirers of Milton. In his essay on Milton,

Arnold wrote : 'Milton has made the great style no longer an exotic here ; he has made it an inmate amongst us, a leaven, and a power,' Hopkins, a Victorian only chronologically, fully recognized Milton's superb craftsmanship when he wrote : 'His verse as one reads it seems something necessary and eternal. Of the prose writers of the later nineteenth century mention may be made of Macaulay, who bestowed unstinted praise on Milton in his essay on the poet, in which he contrasted him with Dante, described as the father of Tuscan literature. It has rightly been said that to Macaulay belongs the credit of being one of the first (if not *the* first) of prose critics to do justice to Milton's Sonnets and reverse the eighteenth-century verdict, as expressed by Johnson and Steevens.

V

It is in course of his essay on Milton that Macaulay makes the apparently startling statement that 'As civilization advances, poetry almost necessarily declines' Macaulay might have had epic poetry especially in mind though he does not say this in so many words, and we know that, as the Indian critics like Rabindranath Tagore and Ramendrasundar Trivedi have also pointed out, gone are the days of heroic poetry, never to come back. We have to pay a heavy price for this our civilization which, in its onward march, impoverishes us of such precious art forms as epic and tragedy. The ever-increasing 'sick hurry and divided aims' that are the concomitants of progress, make short work of any leisureliness that we might have. The epic poet as well as his audience must have the necessary leisureliness to write and enjoy epic poetry. A kind of expansiveness and amplitude, a cosmic magnitude if you like, is the hallmark of epic poetry ; a heroic poem must have some vastness about its every single aspect. Hence the epic poet, however classical he might be in other respects, must have a somewhat romantic imagination. He must be 'of imagination all compact'. Milton was not born when Shakespeare wrote his *Midsummer-Night's Dream* ; Milton was only eight when Shakespeare died. But I somehow feel that Shakespeare's prophetic vision gave us a fine anticipatory portrait of his glorious successor when Theseus was made to refer to

The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,

Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven.

If any poet ever had any glimpse of the celestial region, that poet must be John Milton.

Since the present age is one of haste and waste, we not only find

no epic poetry flourishing, we find no great interest in epic poetry either. Moreover, sublimity, which is one of the remarkable features of epic poetry, is conspicuous by its absence from modern life. They say that from the sublime to the ridiculous it is but one step. That one step the moderns have over-stepped easily enough. They are now chiefly interested in a form of the ridiculous which they fondly call the absurd. The most popular art form of today is films—in cinematography or television. Everything is sophisticated and mechanical, and more often than not, ironically enough, 'nasty, brutish, and short'. It is no wonder that most modern English and American poets—William Butler Yeats being a splendid exception—have looked to lesser poets than Milton for their inspiration. These modern poets would find metal more attractive elsewhere and go to the decadent dramatists of the Jacobean age, to some of the minor Metaphysical poets, or even to writers on the Continent like the nineteenth-century French poets Baudelaire and Laforgue. Milton, nearer home, could not inspire or satisfy them. Is it because Milton has a daily beauty in his life which makes the modern poets ugly, and they can only lose their temper and hurl abuses, as Ezra Pound actually does when he says that he despises Milton's 'asinine bigotry, his beastly hebraism, the coarseness of his mentality' ? Elsewhere Pound describes Milton as 'the worst of poison' and 'a thorough-going decadent in the worst sense of the term'. This violent hatred of Milton is an extreme instance, verging on perversion perhaps, but the fact remains that Milton leaves the modern writer more or less cold.

But what about the modern writer in the East, especially in 'the land where flows/Ganges and Indus' (these are Milton's own words in Book IX of *Paradise Lost*) ? It is hardly likely that modern Indian writers, who often have a western education, should react differently to Milton, since they often slavishly copy their western counterparts. Of the Indian writers belonging to earlier ages, perhaps Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1824-1888) alone had had any significant Miltonic influence on him. (The Miltonic influence on Bengali poets like Hemchandra Banerjee and Navinchandra Sen actually came more or less via Madhusudan.) When Dutt described the world of the dead or 'Pretapuri' in the VIIIth canto of his *Meghnadvadh Kavya*, he was indebted not only to Virgil and Dante but also to Milton. Dutt wanted to render the grand style of Milton into his own exotic Bengali and to sound the magic of Miltonic blank verse in his own *amitraksara chhanda*. Madhusudan Dutt may also be regarded as the father of the Bengali sonnet and in this also he was obviously indebted to Milton, though it is curious that of the ten sonnets of his which he devoted to ten Indian and foreign

poets, not one was concerned with Milton. Surely Madhusudan was closer to Milton than to Dante, Tennyson or Victor Hugo. It is however notable that of the three quotations used by Dutt as epigraphs on the title-page of his first poetical work, *Tilottama sambhaava Kavya*, one is from Milton: 'Fit audience find, though few.' And of Dutt's other references to Milton, we can just have one specimen here. This is from one of the letters that Dutt wrote to Rajnarayan Bose about his first book :

I am afraid you think my style hard, but, believe me, I never study to be grandiloquent like the majority of the 'barren rascals' that write books in these days of literary excitement. The words come unsought, floating in the stream (I suppose I must call it) Inspiration ! Good Blank Verse should be sonorous and the best writer of Blank Verse in English is the toughest of poets—I mean old John Milton !

Good old John Milton seems to be best when all is said and done !

Dutt's correspondent, Rajnarayan Bose, it may be remarked in passing, was a distinguished Bengali prose writer and was himself influenced by Milton. The famous passage in Milton's impassioned plea for the liberty of the printing Press, *Areopagitica*, on 'a noble and puissant nation' (with the image of Samson implicit in it) was beautifully adapted by Bose in his essay on the supremacy of Hinduism.

The most fruitful influence of Milton on any Indian writer can perhaps best be traced in Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*. Sri Aurobindo thought of Milton as a great poet but thought him inferior to Homer, Shakespeare and Valmiki. The sage of Pondicherry would place Milton in the second category of great poets along with Dante, Kalidasa, Aeschylus and Virgil. Echoes of *Paradise Lost* are discernible to any perceptive reader of *Savitri*, which is one of the landmarks in what is now generally known as Indo-Anglian literature.

VI

Where, precisely, is Milton's greatest significance for his readers of today ? I for one think that Milton can teach us, if anybody at all can, how to play the man. Very often we are tempted to play the coward. We have to be forever fighters in the battle-field of life and Milton teaches us this as much through his life as through his poetry. All his life Milton had to fight against heavy odds ; other men write tragedies, Milton lived one. Time and again outward circumstances proved too hard for him ; his first wife left him for a time and his second wife died in childbirth, he lost his eyesight completely, monarchy—which he

hated—was restored. But he was fighting on, though he knew that he was fighting only a losing battle.

A well-known Sanskrit *sloka* or verse enjoins us to meet life with patient fortitude, whatever might be our fate, we must keep ourselves unvanquished in spirit. This is exactly that Milton wants us to do ; the ideal celebrated by Wordsworth in the last line of his noble sonnet on the revolutionary Negro leader, Toussaint L'Ouverture : 'Man's unconquerable mind'. This is also the ideal of all great writers of tragedy. They must show their tragic protagonists fighting manfully :

Under the bludgeonings of chance.

My head is bloody, but unbowed.

It is only then that there will be induced that feeling of terror in the hearts of the readers and spectators which Aristotle thought so essential to the tragic effect.

Milton is the supreme poet of man's unconquerable soul. It is this that he sings in poem after poem, and especially in his masterpiece, No matter what the apparent subject-matter of the poem is. There are people who think that Milton chose a subject for *Paradise Lost* which was poetically unsuitable. Nothing can be farther from the truth. Goethe, I think, may be allowed the last word on the subject :

Our German aesthetical people are for ever talking about 'poetical' and 'unpoetical' subject : and from one point of view they are not, perhaps, altogether wrong ; still, at bottom, no subject is unpoetical, if only the poet knows how to treat it aright.

And Milton knows how to treat his subject aright. Except only occasionally, theology or anything else does not develop in *Paradise Lost* at the expense of poetry. For Milton, as for all true poets, the poetry's the thing. And the poetry is in the pity. And this pity is all the more profound because it wells up not in the actual battle-field of Wilfred Owen but in the symbolic battle-field of the human heart.

Milton's vision is essentially a tragic vision. The underlying note of *Paradise Lost* is one of utter sadness, but a sadness not unmixed with majesty. *Paradise Lost* may be regarded as the greatest tragedy in the English language, even though it is not written in the conventional dramatic form. The Sanskrit critic Anandavardhana has suggested that the predominant *rasa* or sentiment of Valmiki's *Ramayana* is not any conventional one like *srngara* (amatory) *vira* (heroic) or *santa* (tranquil), but a different one altogether : *karuna* (sad). It is this *karuna-rasa* which is the prevailing note of *Paradise Lost* as well.

This *karuna-rasa* envelops the characters of Adam and Eve. They are Milton's greatest character creations. Satan may impress us for a time; and we may run away for a moment with Blake's idea that Milton

belonged to the Devil's party without knowing it. But very soon we are disillusioned. Satan is at bottom a crude self-seeker and to say that he is the protagonist of *Paradise Lost* is to do Milton's epic poem the greatest injustice. As for God, Milton's task was a formidable one. It is impossible to portray Someone who transcends all portrayal in words or deeds. But then Milton has to attempt a portrayal since he was bound by the exigency of his subject-matter. Moreover, I think it would be no blasphemy to suggest that though he loved God, he loved Man no less. Rather, his appears to be the principle of 'art for man's sake'. It is his intense love of man that enables him to give us such intensely erotic yet completely dignified, such unforgettable, sketches of married love. What is the poetry of John Donne or Coventry Patmore before the glory that is Milton? But love and happiness do not go together. Adam and Eve also have to experience their share of unhappiness. They have lost their paradise. But they have been reassured of their love for each other. And what more can a mortal expect? The lack of finality that marks the poignant last lines of *Paradise Lost*, depicting the journey of Adam and Eve, 'imparadis'd in one another's arms', gives Milton's epic a new dimension altogether :

They, looking back, all the eastern side beheld
Of Paradise, so late their happy-seat,
Waved over by that flaming brand, the gate
With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms :
Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon :
The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide :
They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.

Was it the beginning of the end? Or only the end of the beginning?
I wonder.

WOMAN IN FOUR SONNETS OF MILTON

K. LAHIRI

Milton's conception of womanhood has not always been correctly interpreted. It has been the fashion—a fashion, set going by Dr. Johnson—to look upon the poet as a misogynist, woman-hater. A common complaint against Milton is that he was a Turk in his low estimation of women.

This sweeping criticism does not seem to be fully borne out by facts; the charge can not be substantiated by the man's attitude to the several women he knew in life or by all the women characters of the poet's creation.

Of his mother, whom he lost when he was twenty-nine, Milton had a delicate impression. While the scrivener-father was no good companion for his erudite and ambitious son, the poet loved and cherished her memory fondly: 'She smiled at one's jests, admired one's gifts, believed in one's greatness, and saw to one's comforts'. And Milton's first love poem was written, when he was about twenty, on seeing a woman walking the roads of the City, and in his susceptible eyes she appeared a goddess, much like Venus: he was at once wounded by Cupid: he burnt and wrote with fervour, though later the poet attached an epilogue of ten lines, compensatory lines of lofty contempt for past vanities.

The objection against Milton of misogyny is amply disproved by several of his imaginative figures like Eve in *Paradise Lost* and the Lady in *Comus*, by the noble tribute he pays to the 'honourable wife of Winchester', and various passages in his prose tracts. Four of Milton's sonnets—Nos. 9, 10, 15 and 24—add to the sum total of the impression of women that the reader gathers from his writings.

Woman is not invariably placed by Milton in a lower order as a specimen of the human species, as all flesh, brainless and without a soul. She is not altogether insignificant in body, mind and character, in physical features and intellectual qualities, on emotional, moral and spiritual levels of life.

It may be admitted that Milton generally assigns to woman a position distinctly inferior to that of man. Women, he believed, were not much: man was the image of God, woman only the glory of man: woman was

created for man and not man for woman. 'A beautiful plaything fit to minister to our joy but very inferior in the scale of intelligence'—this may appear, to the casual reader, to be Milton's verdict upon woman.

But is Eve, for instance, that much inferior? She is, no doubt, easier tempted by Satan, and in her turn tempts man easily and is the cause of his fall, but her brain matter is not all soft: Eve's intelligence is only less than that of Adam. In those four sonnets, woman, in Milton's view, is both beautiful and good, loving and virtuous. At the early stage, Milton's idea of man's relation to woman is far from misogynistic. In the Latin dirge, *Epitaphium Damonis*, the maidens tell Thyrsis that youth by right seeks love, and twice wretched is he who has loved late—'*bis ille miser qui serus amavit*'—to which Thyrsis makes no direct reply. And did not Milton fall in love with the pretty face and form of a girl of seventeen, Mary, the eldest daughter of Richard Powell, who owed a considerable sum of money to the Milton family, though the poet was not able in the important art of perceiving what a young woman is behind her pretty face?

Addressed to women, the four sonnets represent four beautiful types of womanhood—the virgin, the matron, the Christian woman, and the perfect wife. *To a Virtuous Young Lady* (sonnet No. 9) is the portrait of the 'Virgin pure and good' that is held up for admiration. The character is far from low or mean. The poet speaks of woman in a tone of warm appreciation, and writes not simply with tender chivalry but in an attitude of distant reverence.

The poem is undated; from its position in the 1645 volume we may infer that it was composed perhaps in the winter of that year; some time before his first wife having deserted him, Milton was thinking of marrying a Miss Davis, to whom, it is suggested, the sonnet was addressed. In his mental state at the moment, disappointed by one woman and hoping to find his bliss in another, it was but natural for him to idealize womanhood in the latter, who was obviously younger, 'in the prime of earlier youth.'

In the full flush of youth, when the senses are eager for tasting pleasures in 'the broad way and green', 'the virgin wise' prefers the narrow path of virtue, to toil laboriously up the steep 'hill of heavenly truth', in the good company of Mary and Ruth. Like 'the five wise virgins', in Matthew, chapter XXV, she will fill the lamp of her life with the 'odorous' oil of noble deeds, and will trim and light the lamp when the Divine Bridegroom comes at the mid-hour of night. And she will be readily admitted to the happy company of his 'feastful friends'.

Milton significantly compares his ideal virgin with holy women in scriptural literature—Mary, unworldly sister of Martha, and Ruth, Naomi's

loyal daughter-in-law, and the five wise maidens. By her virtue she has earned her right to be among the blessed company of saints and martyrs, who live in perpetual communion with God. And Milton's attitude to the splenetic and fretful women is not of anger and hatred but rather of pity and ruth.

To the Lady Margaret Ley (Sonnet No. 10), written about the same time, represents an elderly matron, a paragon of wit and virtue. It was Milton's chief diversion of an evening to visit her, daughter of James Ley, Earl of Marlborough, who had been Lord Treasurer of England during the reign of James I. 'This lady being a woman of great wit and ingenuity had a particular honour for him and took much delight in his company, as likewise Captain Hobson, her husband, a very accomplished gentleman'. At the time there was in Milton's heart a hunger for cheerful and appreciative company. He got what he wanted during his visit to this lady. When she had nothing but 'honour for him and took much delight in his company', it is expected that he in reciprocation would commend her as the repository of virtue and idealism.

The Lady, however, is lauded by Milton not so much for her own merits as for the reflected glory of her great father. He shone in both the positions of Lord High Treasurer (1622) and Lord Chancellor of England's Council (1628) 'unstained with gold or fee'; free from the least suspicion of having taken bribes or having otherwise dealt corruptly—a rare integrity in a politician of the age. He dealt honourably in his offices, so long as he held them; and when he was removed from them, at the sudden dissolution of Charles's Third Parliament, he quitted cheerfully without repining. The poem is frankly an encomium less of the daughter than of her father. She not only relates his virtues eloquently, evoking a living image, but herself has inherited those virtues. But the only word of praise Milton has for her is 'honoured', an epithet which hardly had any higher adulatory sense beyond its value as a formal language of courtesy and chivalry.

How a cultivated wife might have affected Milton's views of her sex we shall never know. Perhaps Eve would have joined Adam and the archangel in their cosmic conversation. At any rate Milton neglected to properly educate his daughters.

Sonnets Nos. 10 and 15 may well be contrasted with Milton's five Italian sonnets which also deal with woman. Milton, it may be said generally, was always susceptible to the attraction of female loveliness. In the Italian sonnets the poet is lured by sheer sensuous charm. In the four English sonnets he fixes upon the qualities which constitute the beauty of the soul; the appeal is primarily spiritual.

On the Religious Memory of Mrs. Catherine Thomson, My Christian

Friend, Deceased Dec. 16, 1646 (sonnet No. 15) presents Milton's ideal 'Christian woman whose works, alms and good endeavour follow her to the immortal streams'. The poem had no title in the original print of 1673 ; the title was later affixed to the Cambridge Ms. About Mrs. Thomson—'Mrs' or 'Mistress' was freely applied to unmarried ladies in the seventeenth century—nothing further is known beyond the fact that Milton dwelt for sometime in the year 1650 in the house of Mr. Thomson ; probably she belonged to that family.

The poet's friend lived a true Christian life on earth with Faith and Love as her constant companions. When her soul ripened and became full worthy to dwell in the presence of God, she gave up earthly life with patient resignation. Her alms, good deeds and noble endeavour did not linger behind in this earth nor were these buried with her body in the grave. Rather these followed her to Heaven ; Faith clothed them with purple beams of glory and azure angelic wings, and Love guided them heavenward. When she is called upon for judgement before God, her good deeds speak up in her defence, and she is invited to drink her fill of the perennial living fountains of Heaven. The Lady in *Comus* also is a type of 'the sun-clad power of Chastity', and by her boasting of it, succeeds in making *Comus* as nearly uncomfortable as the gay creature can be ; and *Comus* has such grace about him that the Lady must summon all her defences to resist him. His poetry pours forth in entrancing eloquence, while the Lady's is often a little wordy. Similarly in sonnet No. 15 there is no trace of the fleshly body and carnal desires of the woman ; she is sublimated into the spirit, the purest essence of the soul inheriting the true Christian life in eternal communion with God. It is doubtful whether the particular woman to whom the sonnet is addressed was worthy of this high praise : rather the cardinal principle of Christianity is attributed to this obscure lady.

Lastly in his famous sonnet, *On His Deceased Wife* (Sonnet No. 24) Milton seems to have realized in her his ideal of the perfect wife. The poem testifies to his love for his recently (1658) departed wife and his reverence for her purity, all expressed in living poetic imagery and sustained throughout by intensity of emotion. Only fifteen months after her marriage, Catherine died in child-bed, to which event there is a reference in the poem. She was buried with her infant in St. Margaret's Church, Westminster, and two centuries later a memorial window dedicated to her, was presented to that church by an American, a Mr. George W. Childs of Philadelphia, and Matthew Arnold, presiding over the function, delivered a remarkable dissertation on Milton.

Milton's first marriage had been unhappy ; but he remembered his second wife with deep sorrow. As represented in the sonnet, she is

both a saint and a woman. She appears 'in her person', pulsating with strong passion, yet 'vested all in white'. A perfect poise is maintained between the body and the soul. The sonnet gives a poignant expression to Milton's tender memory of one whose face was ever 'veiled' on earth but of whom he hoped to have a full, clear view in heaven. He recalls the vision of a dream in which this saintly woman, whom he had lately married and lost, was restored to him from death, like Alcestis returned to Admetus by Hercules. She is pure in body and mind; her purity is symbolized by the immaculate white robe in which she is clothed. The imagery of the white dress of Hebrew ladies of old when they were cleansed from 'spot of child-bed taint' is suggested by the sad end of Catherine and is quite appropriate to her.

The statement, 'her face was veiled', is no regretful confession of Milton's inability to observe her closely enough, short as their married life was, but is a true characterization of womanhood that, with the closest intimacy, maintains a mystic veil around it. To the eye of the poet's imagination, veiled though her face was, her whole body shone with an effulgence of love, sweetness and goodness such as could come from no one else. In spite of the veil of mystery surrounding her physically, her whole personality emanated a rare, rich grace divine.

The essential woman in her is not, however, lost in the 'saint' of the Puritan poet. For though it is the reunion of a disembodied spirit from heaven with her lover in dream on earth, natural human passion in her seeks physical satisfaction as she inclines to embrace her 'late espoused' husband. The cry of lamentation, 'But Oh!', is wrung out of his agonised heart in the pathetic situation in which her vision melts, and Milton wakes into his day of 'endless night'.

CHANGING IMAGES OF MILTON

SUNIL KANTI SEN

In Indian universities Milton lives rather precariously as a teacher's poet. We remember Mark Pattison's remark that 'an appreciation of Milton is the last reward of consummated scholarship' and seem to delight in the mosaic style of Milton, the rich wealth of ancient lore embodied in his poetry. Most of us belong to 'the ledger school of criticism' (a striking phrase used by Walter Raleigh) and enjoy sweating at Milton's learned poetry. And what we transmit to our students is a sort of commonplace book full of quotations. Unlike Shakespeare Milton remains to us an outsider. Those who are familiar with the pronouncements of Leavis or Eliot dismiss him 'with remarkably little fuss'.

Milton at home is not pre-eminently a teacher's poet. The changing images of Milton starting from the late 17th century down to the present age are an evidence of the strange vitality of the Milton myth. The sublime Milton of Addison, the pastoral Milton of Akenside, the radical Milton of Shelley, the conservative Milton of Wordsworth, the fascist Milton of Robert Graves—Milton has always teased English sensibility. That every age should fashion Milton in its own image or every poet should find in Milton the kind of significance that should correspond to his own predilection is not surprising ; what is indeed amazing is that Milton should provide to every age a point of reference. The present article does not aim to give a complete survey of the different images of Milton in his long career. It will focus a few significant images and try to relate them to contemporary taste and sensibility.

In the early 18th century Milton was firmly established as a major god in the classical pantheon. The deep-toned rhythms of Milton's verse and its elevated diction, though remote and hierophantic, were officially praised above the convivial rhymed couplets of Waller. 'Sublime' was the characteristic epithet applied to Milton. There was, however, some ambivalence in the current attitude. Milton's 'modern' relevance was doubtful but as an ancient his sublimity was a virtue. The newly discovered treatise '*On the Sublime*' attributed to Longinus started the critical vogue of the sublime. The aesthetics of Dryden deriving from the world of Hobbes and Locks had rejected the wit and extravagance of the metaphysicals and the world which the early 18th

century inherited was dominated by the prescribed canons of propriety and decorum. The new vogue of the sublime, though contrary to the central concern of the age, expressed a polite dissatisfaction with the prescriptive laws laid down for the craft of writing and a recognition that genius defies all laws of craftsmanship. Perhaps the new theory of the sublime was an unconscious return to Plato's *Ion* where a poet is described as a frenzied person. Addison in his *Spectator* papers popularized the idea of the sublime. When applied to external objects it meant the big, the awesome and the terrifying. As an aesthetic theory the sublime connoted the unplumbed mystery of genius which does not conform to any rules of art. Addison defined the sublime and the new concept of poetic genius in several *Spectator* papers.

I must observe with Longinus that the productions of a great genius, with many lapses and inadvertencies are infinitely preferable to the works of an inferior kind of author, which are scrupulously exact and conformable to all the rules of correct writing.
—No. 291

While the practitioners of poetry placed judgment and wit above passion the new aesthetics of the sublime extolled the ancients—Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton—as 'sublime and pathetic' poets.

To Akenside and Thomson Milton was a slightly listless solitary' roaming in twilight groves.

I steal impatient from the sordid haunts
Of strife and low ambition, to attend
Thy sacred presence in the sylvan shade.

Pleasures of Imagination

O bear me then to vast embowaring shades,
To twilight groves, and visionary vales,
To weeping grottoes, and prophetic glooms. *Autumn*

This image derives from the poet-figure in *Il Penseroso*,
And when the sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me, Goddess, bring,
To arched walks of twilight groves,
And shadows brown that Sylvan loves.

Milton who is pastiched in the poetry of Akenside and Thomson is a passive figure, not a poet 'touched with hallowed fire'. *Il Penseroso* written at Horton was a pleasant interlude in the strenuous programme of studies undertaken by Milton. Its melancholy is a conventional stereotype, a literary stance, a symbol of a solitary, contemplative poet. It appears again in *Comus* in the figure of Thyrsis.

I sate me down to watch upon a bank
With ivy canopied and interwove

With flaunting honeysuckle, and began
 Wrapt in a pleasing fit of melancholy
 To meditate my rural minstrelsy,

This pastoral poet-figure is different from Milton's own image of a true poet. Here are a few characteristic Miltonic utterances. 'He who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things ought himself to be a true poem'. (*Apology for Smectymnus*) 'The end of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents'. (*On Education*) A true poem is 'a work not to be raised from the heat of youth, or the vapours of wine, like that which flows at waste from the pen of some vulgar amonist...but by devout prayer to that eternal Spirit who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases'. (*The Reason of Church Government*) Milton the man striving to pattern his life on the Renaissance ideal of a complete man and Milton the poet writing in the manner of an inspired prophet are the two faces of the same figure which is altogether different from Akenside's image of a pastoral poet haunting twilight groves.

The Sabine farm of Horace and the landscape of *Il Penseroso* are the background of a great deal of reflective poetry written in the Augustan age. It seems surprising that the Augustan poets with their predominately urban background should return to Horatian farm and early Milton. Augustan 'nature' was different from the 'nature' of Vaughan or the later romantics. 'Nature' as used in the critical utterances of the age was a highly ambiguous term. In Pope's dictum 'Follow Nature' it is 'nature methodized' or the well-ordered physical universe of which human nature is a microcosm. It is a paradigm of order and decorum to which life and art should conform. According to Rymer nature is antithetical to romance, 'Nature' which figures in the poetry of Akenside and Thomson is nature out of doors, but idyllic and pastoral-not primitive nature hostile to art and civilized life but a pleasant retreat from the pressing business of living. Solitariness to the Augustans was not a retreat from urban anonymity; it meant instead a retreat from urban identity to a pastoral anonymity, a vantage ground which would give a new insight into urban life. Identity as we understand it was a quaint eccentricity to the Augustans.

The hermit poet image of Milton popularized by Thomson and Akenside was badly pricked by the central figure of the Augustan age, Dr. Johnson. The new middle-class puritanism of the age as embodied in the novels of Richardson was different from Milton's brand of puritanism, and the term 'virtue' came to mean an unaggressive state

of mind, a quiet respectability, what Milton derived as 'cloistered virtue'. A distaste for Milton's republicanism was explicitly stated by Johnson. 'Milton's republicanism was, I am afraid, founded on an envious hatred of greatness, and a sullen desire of independence, in petulance impatient of control, and pride disdainful of superiority. It is to be suspected that his predominant desire was to destroy rather than to establish, and that he felt not so much the love of liberty as repugnance to authority'. Johnson's praise of Milton's poetry, though unenthusiastic, was just by Augustan standards of taste but he found Milton the man antipathetic.

'The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of angels and God, and at liberty when of devils and hell, is because he was a true poet and of the Devil's party without knowing it'. These memorable words of Blake may serve as an epigraph to the romantic image of Milton. The 19th century romantics, Blake and Shelley in particular, rejected the solitary bard image of the earlier century and their return to Milton was part of their quest for a new morality, both private and social. They were not overtly interested in the architectonics of Milton's poetry; the characters figuring in Milton's poetry—Adam, Eve, Satan and God—were new and vivid metaphors to them, dramatizing the problems of evil, suffering and freedom. Both as poet and painter Blake returned to Milton and in reinterpreting *Paradise Lost* he tried to rescue the essential Milton, the true poet, from the conformist mask of Milton. According to Blake the true meaning of *Paradise Lost* is contrary to its stated intention. Satan is Blake's image of Messiah and God is Blake's version of evil. While reversing the roles of Satan and God Blake was attempting to reorder in terms of his own insight and experience the old world of received ideas.

Shelley too rejected the passive Milton image of the 18th century. In the Preface to *Prometheus Unbound* he says: '... the sacred Milton was, let it ever be remembered, a republican, a bold inquirer into morals and religion'. In Shelley's image of Milton the polemicist and the poet—the passionate pamphleteer defending civil, religious and domestic liberty and the vatic poet—have the same radical identity. In *Paradise Lost* he reads a new allegory for the problem of evil and suffering and in his epic poem *Prometheus Unbound* he redefines the old Satan God myth in new terms.

Mary Shelley in *Frankenstein* explores the problem of evil and ultimate responsibility with *Paradise Lost* as a conscious frame of reference. The grotesque monster created by God-like Frankenstein craves love and friendship but he is cast off as an alien and driven to sin. The words put into his mouth recall Satan in *Paradise Lost*, Book IV,

'Shall I not then hate them who abhor me ? I will keep no terms with my enemies. I am miserable, and they shall share my wretchedness.'

So farewell Hope, and with Hope farewell Fear
Farewell Remorse: all good to me is lost ;
Evil be thou my Good ;

Wordsworth was not of 'the Devil's party and he used Milton's rhetoric to rebuke the Radicals.

Ye aspire
Rashly, to fall once more ; and that false fruit,
Which, to your overweening spirits, yields
Hope of a fight celestial, will produce
Misery and shame.

The Excursion, IV

Wordsworth is saying in a different language what Pope had said earlier in his *Essay on Man*. Using the traditional concept of the great chain of being based on the immutable principles of order and gradation Pope expressed his disapproval of all idealistic schemes of reform. To Wordsworth Milton was a high-souled conservative. 'Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart.' The star is a symbol of the unchanging laws of life, a sure guide to people tempted by the seductive slogans of reform. Wordsworth's distrust of all programmes of reform goes back to the moral crisis which overtook him after he had rejected Godwinism. Whether his earlier rejection of Annette was at the root of his cooling ardour for radicalism (as argued by Herbert Read) is not relevant in the present context. Wordsworth's return to nature also meant a steady retreat from his early passion for reform and with the decline of his poetic faculties his conservatism hardened into a Tory stance. Wordsworth's image of a conservative Milton was closely related to his growing fear that a state of anarchy was threatening to engulf English manners and morals. Hence his prayer to Milton, 'And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.' By freedom he meant a willing subservience to duty.

The reputation of Milton in the 20th century has no strikingly sharp direction. A general distaste for sublimity has dislodged Milton as a vatic poet. The following remark of Wallace Stevens is characteristic of this distaste for grandeur. 'It is hard to think of a thing more out of time than nobility, Looked at plainly it seems false and dead and ugly.' There is also a growing dissatisfaction with the stylized movement and diction of Milton's verse. In the changing images of Milton the focus has now and again shifted from Milton the poet to Milton the man. Eliot in particular is responsible for the current attitude to Milton the man. 20th century writers have generally found Milton the man an antipathetic

character. 'As a man he is antipathetic. Either from the moralist's point of view, or from the theologian's point of view, or from the psychologist's point of view, or from that of the political philosopher, or judging by the ordinary standards of likeableness in human beings, Milton is unsatisfactory.' (Eliot). Robert Graves in *Wife to Mr. Milton* says : 'The post-war Cromwellian solution of these political questions, which Milton endorsed, was drastic and unconstitutional—it would now be called 'undisguised Fascism' ; and democratic journalists and politicians who quote with approval Wordsworth's "Milton, thou should'st be living at this hour./England hath need of thee" should read, or re-read, Milton's life and works.'

Though shorn of his locks Milton survives as a polemical figure in literary and academic circles. And the debate on Milton's influence on the English language, or Milton's God, goes on unabated, in tones sometimes serious, sometimes flippant. Milton is no longer a remote figure ; paradoxically, he has come closer to the writers of the present century. Frank Kermode has prophesied that 'the time cannot be far off when it (*Paradise Lost*) will be read once more as the most perfect achievement of English poetry, perhaps the richest and most intricately beautiful poem in the world.

IN SEARCH OF DRAMA IN AN EPIC

SUSHIL MUKHERJEE

Milton was born when Shakespeare, having achieved his highest in tragedy, chose to pass on to a new type of play, the dramatic romance. Even after the great master's retirement from the stage the theatres in London were drawing large crowds with plays from the pen of his contemporaries and successors till 1640 when the theatres were closed. The young Milton grew up in a theatrical atmosphere.

Besides, it is well-known that in spite of the puritanical environment in which he was brought up, Milton developed a love of music (his father was a talented composer) which deepened in course of time to become a ruling passion of his life. Along with this was his love for poetry and the classics which certainly included the great dramatists in whose model he desired to write a drama—*Samson Agonistes* being the late fruit of his early desire. The young Milton's love for the theatre is also seen in his well-known lines in *L'Allegro* : "Then to the well-trod stage anon,/If Jonson's learned sock be on,/Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,/Warble his native wood-notes wild". To the great Shakespeare the young poet paid a marvellous tribute in a short poem beginning : "What needs my Shakespeare for his honoured bones/The labour of an age in piled stones ?" (*On Shakespeare* : 1630).

It is well-known that Milton's early plan was to write a drama on the theme of Temptation, Sin and Fall. There were "no less than four plans", writes Kenneth Muir (*John Milton*, 1965), for a tragedy on the Fall of Man. Two of these consisted merely of a list of characters. A third divided the subject into five acts. The fourth entitled *Adam Unparadised*, consists of a full scenario". In fact, as early as 1642, Milton had written a few lines of a Scriptural drama. "The notes in the Trinity MS. make it clear", says David Daiches (*Milton*, 1957) "that at one time he considered writing on the Fall of Man in dramatic form. But, though he may well have begun *Paradise Lost* as a tragedy (as Edward Phillips maintained, quoting ten lines of Satan's address to the sun at the beginning of Bk. IV as designed for the beginning of the said tragedy)", he later decided to change over to the epic form as more appropriate.

The fact, therefore, is that drama was Milton's first choice for a theme that has enough drama in it—viz. the revolt of the supposedly

oppressed spirit and "injured merit" against the tyrannical power, backed by a large retinue of kindred souls, the war that followed and the consequent punishment in "adamantine chains" in hell, the plan of revenge, the conspiracy to tempt the innocent and bring about the fall of the created to spite the Creator, the apparent success of the plan, the mutual recrimination and the later reconciliation "of our grand parents", the original Man's first decision to share the fate of the beloved and suffer rather than remain aloof in solitary purity, and the final dramatic scene of the two leaving paradise hand in hand.

It is, therefore, worth while risking an adventure—searching for drama in an epic.

Another thing is perhaps worth considering in this context, viz. the intensely dramatic life of Milton himself. Will it be too much to imagine that the drama of Milton's own life which had reached its climax at the Restoration when he was engaged in writing his *magnum opus*, made it possible for him to make the story, the characters, the situations and the dialogues as much dramatic as possible in many portions of the epic?

I think none acquainted with Milton's life, beginning at his home in Cheapside and St. Paul's School and then Christ's College, Cambridge, the quiet and profitable days at Horton, the enjoyable and the instructive travel in the continent, the sudden return to the land of his birth to take part in the country's struggle for liberty, the exciting period of controversy and vigorous pamphleteering and subsequent work as the Latin Secretary to the Lord Protector of England, the collapse of all hopes and aspirations at the Restoration, the defeat of all ideals so fondly cherished as God's chosen man, the blindness, the political persecution including imprisonment for a short period, the failure in domestic life starting from his first marriage, the helplessness of a blind man, "unregarded age in a corner thrown", and a quiet death after long suffering patiently borne—can deny that the whole story can be drawn in a dramatic line consisting of Exposition. Complication, Climax Denouement and Conclusion. This drama enabled him to give dramatic touches to his work.

A typical example of this drama of personal life transferred to his work is the scene between Adam and Eve in Bk. X. It is a replica of the Milton-Mary Powell scene in the house of one of the poet's relatives where Milton, the angry and disillusioned husband (Mary had left for her father's place within a short time after their marriage and refused to return in spite of letters and messengers sent to bring her back, and Milton, shocked and embittered, had already written his pamphlet on Divorce) was suddenly accosted by the penitent wife who was all the

time waiting in another room waiting for an opportunity to burst forth and now fell at his feet and begged pardon in tears. Milton's first reaction, we are told by Phillips, was one of aversion. But soon his generous nature pardoned the erring wife.

The scene is highly dramatic and would be very interesting on stage. Now, let us turn to the scene between Adam and Eve in Bk. X: "Soft words to his fierce passion she assayed ; / But her, with stern regard, he thus repelled :—/ "Out of my sight, thou serpent ! that name best/ Befits thee, with him leagued, thyself as false/ As hateful." But what was Eve's reaction ? "... but Eve/Not so repulsed, with tears that ceased not flowing./ And tresses all disordered, at his feet / Fell humble, and embracing them, besought / His peace . . . / "Forsake me not thus, Adam ! witness Heaven / What love sincere and reverence, in my heart / I bear thee . . .". As Eve ceased weeping Adam's "heart relented towards her" and he "with peaceful words upraised her soon." This scene of repulsion and reconciliation in *Paradise Lost* is essentially dramatic, eminently stageworthy—a scene parallel to a scene in Milton's own life, and also comparable to the scene between Samson and Delilah in Milton's only drama *Samson Agonistes*.

For quite a long period in his life Milton was engaged in controversial writings and pamphleteering. Arguments and counter-arguments, charges and counter-charges, accusations and defences, abuses and vituperations that mark these prose works during the middle period of Milton's life, gave him a training in presenting characters in his epic who speak different points of view in a dramatic manner. Speeches of Satan and his followers in Bk. I and Bk. II will make this clear. In Satan's opening address in Bk. II "Powers, and Dominions, Deities of Heaven !" —do we not hear an echo of Mark Antony's "Friends, Romans, Countrymen !" ? And the specious argument to claim their 'just inheritance of old' from "the unenvied throne" in hell where "none will claim precedence"—is worth the melodramatic acting of a stage-artist.

That there is a strong element of drama in *Paradise Lost* can be seen from the description of the backdrop of many of these speeches. Take for example, the opening of Bk. II :—"High on a throne of royal state, which far/Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,/Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand/ Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold,/Satan exalted sat". This and many such passages may prove a paradise for stage-decorators and designers. A modern producer of plays will find ample scope for the display of his talent in the arrangement of sets, lights, costumes and properties.

And then take another, case, the description that follows Satan's speech in Bk. I : "He spake : and to confirm his words, out-flew/Millions of

flaming swords, drawn from the thighs/Of mighty Cherubim ; the sudden blaze/Far round illumines Hell. Highly they raged/Against the Highest, and fierce with grasped arms/Clashed on their sounding shields with din of war,/Hurling defiance toward the vault of Heaven." This will be a magnificent spectacle on the stage with light, sound, colour, movement, gorgeously uniformed battalion brandishing shining weapons and shouting challenges. The drama here is only too evident.

One important interest in drama is dialogue. While modern drama delights in short, crisp, pointed dialogue the old plays revelled in long, set speeches with ample decorations and heavy elaborations which, delivered by trained actors, held the audience spell-bound, opening before their mind's eye scenes and situations by sheer force of verbal magic. It is just this that we find again and again in *Paradise Lost*. Satan's speech in Bk. II which opened the debate "whether open war or covert guile" would be the best way, is followed by speeches of Moloch, Belial, Mammon and Beelzebub and any skilful performer on the stage (I am not thinking of actors of modern anti-plays or absurd plays who have neither the skill nor the breath or stamina to deliver long speeches, even of a Shakespearean play) will only be too delighted to "mouth" them with appropriate gestures and modulations of voice. The whole scene is reminiscent of a historical play where the king or the general calls a council to discuss the strategy of war and each member stands up to put forward his suggestion with vigour and skill and the atmosphere becomes warm.

Another essential ingredient in a drama is the principle of contrast. *Paradise Lost* does not lack it in any way. Just note the dramatic contrast in appearance, demeanour, character and opinions of Satan and his followers : Satan, with his inordinate pride and ambition, his sense of "injured merit" and spirit of revenge, sitting "high on a throne of royal state", surrounded by his compeers ;—Moloch, "the strongest and fiercest spirit, now fiercer by despair," whose "sentence is for open war" ; Belial, "in act more graceful and humane", "a fairer person than whom lost not Heaven", who "seemed for dignity composed and high exploit" but in reality was "all false and hollow" (What an opportunity for a character-actor !) whose voice dissuades war, open or concealed, and "who with words clothed in reason's garb/Counselled ignoble ease and peaceful sloth" ; Mammon, "the least erected Spirit that fell/From Heaven, whose "looks and thoughts/Were always downward bent, admiring more/The riches of Heaven's pavement, trodden gold,/Than aught divine or holy else enjoyed/In vision beatific," who would create another heaven in hell with whatever is available there and thinks that "all things invite/To peaceful counsels, and

settled state/Of order, how in safety best we may/Compose our present evils": and Beelzebub, only next in power and crime to his leader Satan, who "in rising seemed a pillar of state", with "Atalantine shoulders fit to bear/The weight of mightiest monarchies", with "deep deliberations and public care writ large on his face", suggesting an easier enterprise—an attack on another World, the happy seat/Of some new race, called Man." One feels tempted to put *Paradise Lost* on the stage (of course, with ample 'cuts') today when the magic of stage-craft can create an illusion of both heaven and hell and when a blending of the stage and screen techniques is a common feature in the theatre. Perhaps it is not difficult to represent on the screen even Satan's journey through Chaos and his encounter with Sin and Death, as in Bk.III.

And what is called Dramatic Relief—that too is there in *Paradise Lost*. After the serious Council Scene follows one of relaxation when the fallen angels "wandering, each his several way/Pursues.../Where he may likeliest find/Truce to his restless thoughts, and entertain/The irksome hours, till his great Chief return."/'Some engage in sports and games, others in music and poetry and so on. This is in the tradition of dramatic composition where a scene of high tension is followed by a lighter scene. Milton, an admirer of Shakespeare, followed a dramatic technique common in Shakespeare.

Let us now pass on to Adam and Eve in Paradise. There is fine drama. First, the background, a sylvan scene where the happy pair is found, passing hand in hand, "the loveliest pair / That ever since in love's embraces met". And then, the dialogue,—“Adam, first of man / To first of women, Eve” speaking : “Sole partner and sole part of all these joys” etc ; and Eve's reply : “O thou for whom / And from whom I was formed flesh of thy flesh,” etc. This is nothing if not love-drama in a romantic scene. It is almost a scene torn out of a Hollywood production with popular film love-pairs in the main roles. Milton visualises the scene and puts words and sentiments in the mouth of lovers which would do honour to a modern scenario or dialogue writer. Eve describes to Adam the story of her first meeting him whose image she was. Eve is surprised and charmed looking at her own reflection in the water. One can remember a number of Hollywood pictures depicting the naive, scantily-clad heroine in a still undiscovered island where a white adventurer has just set his foot in search of gold, the two meeting for the first time, the girl looking at the white man in all wonder ! Eve hears a voice asking her to follow and as she obeys she finds herself face to face with “one fair and tall, under a platane.” Afraid, she turns back and hears a voice : “Return, fair Eve. Whom fliest thou ? Whom thou fliest, of him thou art; / His flesh, his bone.” This scene as the beginning of a

romantic love on the stage will create a heart-throb in a packed house. In Bk. IV Adam and Eve talk as all later lovers on stage and screen have done. Eve, for example, tells Adam that everything is sweet. "Sweet is the breath of morn", "fragrant the fertile earth after soft showers", "sweet the evening mild", but "nothing without thee is sweet." How many times have we heard this on stage or screen?

What follows is drama too.

The scene of happy lovers is too much for the fiend (Recall Iago in *Othello*) who feels envious. "O Hell! what do mine eyes with grief behold?" And then the plan to destroy this happiness of two simple and innocent lovers out of envy. "Ah, gentle pair, ye little think how nigh/Your change approaches, when all these delights/Will vanish, and deliver ye to woe. . . "This is a close parallel to Iago's plan to wreck the happiness of Othello and Desdemona. The dramatic element is too tempting for a Lionel Barrymore or a Charles Laughton to be Satan against a Frederick March-Claudette Colbert combination as Adam and Eve in a Samuel-Goldwyn production.

A careful reading of *Paradise Lost* will show that the story of Adam and Eve, from their first meeting to their leaving paradise, as presented by Milton, is a complete drama and can be presented on the stage with proper editing. The dramatic line will be something like this:

The first meeting—the lonely simple heroine, called by a voice, suddenly seeing before her the lovely, manly hero; then "with eyes of conjugal attraction" her "meek surrender", followed by the happy life in Paradise in love's sweet content, "lulled by nightingales", "and on their naked limbs the flowerie roof" showering roses. This is *Exposition*. Into this abode of bliss Satan enters. He feels envious and plans to destroy this happiness. "Live while ye may,/Yet happy pair; enjoy till I return,/ Short pleasures; for long woes are to succeed." This introduces *Complication*.

Satan works on to achieve his end. He squats like a toad by Eve's ear to give her corrupting dreams. In the mean time news has gone abroad that "some infernal spirit...escaped/The bars of Hell, on errands bad, no doubt", and Gabriel gave order to Ithuriel and Zephon to find out the intruder. A dramatic scene follows—the search and the discovery, followed by a challenge and the answer "Know ye not me?.. Not to know me argues yourselves unknown" etc. This might well have been a scene in a historical drama—an enemy spy being challenged by the king's guards outside the castle and the exchanges that take place.

The complication deepens and suspense grows when with the ending of Bk. IV "on a note of sullen darkness" Bk. V opens with Eve telling Adam of her dream foreshadowing the temptation and fall. Dramatically,

Eve's dream, "...methought, alone, I passed through ways/That brought me on a sudden to the tree/Of interdicted knowledge", is parallel to Macbeth's vision of the dagger before the murder of Duncan, his first sin. And Satan's call to Eve to partake of the "fruit divine" and be equal to the gods: "Taste this, and be henceforth among the gods/Thyself a goddess;" has the echo of the temptation of the crown held out to Macbeth by his wife. This dream, foreshadowing something ominous and Eve's fearful narration and the relief felt later that this was only a dream "O how glad I waked/To find this but a dream", create a dramatic suspense before the Climax that is to come in Bk. IX. The portion in between is appropriate to an epic, viz. Raphael's account of the war in Heaven (Bks. V-VI), his relation "how and wherefore this World was first created", Adam's account of his first days on earth, "his talk with God concerning solitude and fit society", his first meeting and nuptials with Eve (Bk. VIII)—an epic with a vast canvas and innumerable episodes to fill it.

Bk. IX is the *Climax* of the drama of Sin and Temptation, and Milton himself is our guide here. At the very opening of the book he tells us: "I now must change/Those notes to tragic." The tragic theme is thus laid down: "Foul distrust, and breach/Disloyal, on the part of man, revolt/And disobedience; on the part of Heaven,/Now alienated, distance and distaste,/Anger and just rebuke, and judgment given, That brought into this World a world of woe, Sin and her shadow Death, and Misery,/Death's harbinger." Here the total formula of classical tragedy (and Shakespearean too) has been laid down: Sin, Misery and Death.

And dramatic element is very prominent in this part of Milton's epic, viz. the conversation between Adam and Eve, Eve proposing division of labour that they should work in different areas; Adam's fear "lest harm/Befall thee, severed from me", specially because of the warning they had of "the malicious foe" envying their happiness; Eve's mild protestation that Adam should so doubt her firmness; Adam's reasoning with her: "Not diffident of thee do I dissuade...but to avoid/The attempt itself intended by our foe" etc; Eve's wounded vanity and her argument: "And what is faith, love, virtue, unassayed/Alone, without exterior help sustained?", followed by their parting and the return of Eve, already a fallen woman. Adam's premonition has proved true. The enemy was high to befool "our credulous mother". Addressing her in flattering terms "Empress of this fair World, resplendent Eve", Satan describes the wonderful virtue of the tree and its fruit and offers to conduct her there if she is willing to go. "Lead thou", said Eve and she was "led to the tree of Prohibition, root of all our woe". Eve ate the fruit. Any reader of Bk. IX will find that in this scene between Eve and Satan, drama is more

prominent than epic. Satan here is the prototype of a dramatic villain, soft-speaking, innocent-looking, well-wishing, but really shrewd and dangerous ; while Eve is the type of an unsophisticated, weak character, naturally attracted to what is forbidden. This has been the theme of many later plays.

And the scene between Eve when she returns, and Adam who was waiting for her is another interesting drama. Having tasted the forbidden fruit Eve returns late. To her waiting Adam she tells exactly what late coming heroines tell their lovers on the stage : "Thee I have misst, and thought it long, depriv'd/Thy presence, agonie of love till now/Not felt, nor shall be twice, for never more/Mean I to trie, what rash untri'd I sought,/The paine of absēce from thy sight." And then she invites him to do what she has done : "Thou therefore also taste, that equal Lot/ May join us, equal Joy, as equal Love". Milton's description of Adam is again a reproduction of the familiar stage-scene—the expectant lover with flowers and garland for the beloved, and the unexpected turn of events, the great betrayal and the fall of flowers and garlands from the lover's hands. "On the other side, Adam, soon as he heard/ The fatal Trespass done by Eve, amaz'd/Astonied stood and Blank... / From his slack hand the Garland wreath'd for Eve/Down droped, and all the faded Roses shed." If this is not drama one never knows what is.

What follows is again an excerpt of a romantic drama. The initial shock over, the lover comes forward chivalrously to sink or swim with the beloved, come what may. "Some cursed fraud/Of enemy hath beguiled thee, yet unknown,/And me with thee hath ruined ; for with thee/Certain my resolution is to die. How can I live without thee ?" Here are words of a melodrama : "O with thee have fixed my lot,/Certain to undergo like doom. If death/Consort with thee, death is to me as life,"/And then the dramatic description : "...from the bough/ She gave him of that fair enticing fruit/With liberal hand. He scrupled not to eat." So Adam committed the first sin on earth. In Shakespeare's tragedies Nature reacts to man's crimes. *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear* will bear evidence to this, What happens in *Paradise Lost* is a reminder of what we read in Shakespeare. "Earth trembled from her entrails, as again/In pangs, and Nature gave a second groan ; /Sky loured, and, muttering thunder, some sad drops/Wept at completing of the mortal Sin/Original ; .." This is the mark of cosmic tragedy. And here is the *Climax* of the drama.

Then follows the *Denouement*—the reaction, after the first flush of romantic and chivalrous enthusiasm of the hero dies down. The partners in crime accuse each other. To Adam's "O Eve, in evil hour thou didst give ear/To that false Worm.../How shall I behold the face/

Henceforth of God or Angel..." etc, Eve's answer "What words have passed thy lips, Adam severe? Imput'st thou that to my default ?" etc. Bk. IX ends with Adam's angry words "Is this the love, is this the recompense/Of mine to thee, ingrate Eve, expressed/Immutable when thou wert lost, not I—/Who might have lived, and joyed immortal bliss /Yet willingly chose rather death with thee ? /And am I now upbraided as the cause / Of thy transgression ?" Thus goes on the "mutual accusation" which is entirely in the manner of a drama. This reaches a dramatic height at the end of Bk. X where Adam, like Samson in Milton's drama *Samson Agonistes*, shouts at Eve : "Out of my sight, thou serpent" etc. and Eve, like Delilah, begs pardon with tears in her eyes "Forsake me not thus, Adam ! witness Heaven/What love sincere and reverence in my heart / I bear thee, and unweeting have offended,/Unhappily deceived !"

The *Catastrophe* or the *Conclusion* of this interesting drama is, however, not in a quarrel leading to violent separation as in a tragedy, but in a sweet reconciliation, when Adam and Eve leave Paradise to seek an "inner paradise" when the outer is lost—"with good/Still overcoming evil, and by small/Accomplishing great things." The guilty pair leave Paradise perfectly content to enter a world of work and struggle. The ending of *Paradise Lost*, the last scene, will do honour to a scenario writer of a modern film :

High in front advanced,
The brandished sword of God before them blazed,
Fierce as a comet ; which with torrid heat,
And vapour as the Libyan air adust,
Began to parch that temperate clime ; whereat
In either hand the hastening Angel caught
Our lingering parents, and to the eastern gate
Led them direct, and down the cliff as fast
To the subjected plain—then disappeared.
They looking back, all the eastern side beheld
Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
Waved over by that flaming brand ; the gate
With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms.
Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon ;
The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.
They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.

We may now conclude with a brief discussion whether Satan possesses any trait of a tragic hero.

Who is it that is ultimately defeated in *Paradise Lost*? In relation to which character, as presented and intended by the poet, do we feel the sense of waste, so essential to tragedy? Adam's or Satan's? Adam is unparadised, no doubt. But Adam, it is clear, leaves Paradise with no regret. He deliberately chooses to 'fall' with Eve. It is his love for Eve which makes him take this fatal but admirable decision. He cannot sacrifice his partner. "How can I live without thee, how forgoe/Thy sweet converse and Love so dearly joind, ...no, no I feel/The link of Nature draw me : Flesh of flesh/Bone of my Bone thou art, and from thy State/Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe." Love's exultation is here. It is a sacrifice deliberately made for love. Adam eats the fruit of the fatal tree and as the inevitable punishment comes he accepts it. He reconciles himself to the changing seasons in place of the perpetual spring of Eden, and to the earning of bread by the sweat of his brow considering it more honourable than a life of ease and idleness in Paradise. Milton's own faith in a life of struggle amidst thousand temptations as against "cloistered virtue", his idea about the dignity of labour as opposed to a parasitical life find expression in Adam. And then the ideal of "inner paradise" that "once attained can never be lost" upholds the fallen hero. Adam's fall is his triumph.

On the other hand, Satan's triumph is his fall. He triumphs over God's finest creatures, not in the shape of a luminous angel that he once was, nor "in bulk as huge/As whom the fables name of monstrous size,/Titanian or Earth-born" etc.—the Satan that was—but as an ugly serpent. One may exclaim as in a tragedy, "O what a fall!"

In the earlier books of *Paradise Lost* Satan is a heroic figure, one who had dared challenge the Almighty from a sense of "injured merit" and drawn behind him some of the choicest spirits like Beelzebub, Moloch and others and also a host of followers who stuck to him even in his worst days (as in *Antony and Cleopatra* Antony's followers did) because they knew that "for general safety he despised his own." Satan's leadership is openly acknowledged by his "bold compeer", Beelzebub: "O Prince, O Chief of many throned Powers/That led the embattled Seraphim to war/Under thy conduct, and in dreadful deeds/Fearless, endangered Heaven's perpetual King" etc. Even after his defeat and overthrow he retains a greatness of bearing which is evident in the manner in which he accosts Death and Chaos. The monarch of the nether world, Chaos, trembles before him and recognises his former greatness. "I know thee Stranger, who thou art/That mighty leading Angel, who of late/Made head against Heaven's being, though overthrown." Satan keeps himself erect even after his fall, in his encounter with Michael in Heaven and Gabriel on Earth. It may be that

he has deliberately chosen evil—"Evil be thou my good", but even then there is a definite boldness and a defiant spirit in the pursuit of evil with a purpose. Satan has the mark of a villain-hero. To carry out his purpose he takes upon himself the task of a lone journey to the unknown world like a true leader. As a true leader he feels for the distress of his followers, distress caused by his revolt. Their misery brings tears to his eyes. He is so much moved that thrice he attempts to address them but thrice his voice is choked and tears burst forth from his eyes. Not only this. When he sees his prospective victims, Adam and Eve, for the first time in Eden, he admires their grace and feels pity that for "public reasons" he will have to play the role of their enemy and bring about their fall.

Satan, thus, does not lack the stature of a tragic hero. His degeneration may be compared with that of Macbeth who, from Bellona's bridegroom" and "valour's minion" turns into a murderer and a tyrant. "The character of Satan", says Daiches, "shows the continual misuse of potential good qualities which become first distorted, then obscured, then perverted into an evil which is at last repulsive." This is the usual track of a tragic hero.

The rebel against authority and tyranny, defeated not because of want of valour but because the Enemy had a secret weapon, despairing peace, resolved on a fresh war (for "who can think of submission?"). But that is ultimately changed to an attack on two innocent creatures who had done him no wrong. The attack is not even frontal. Avoiding the main entrance to the garden, the hero of a formidable battle against the Almighty, the battle that once shook the Heaven and the Earth, scales the wall like a petty thief and sits on the Tree of Life like a cormorant. For a time there is conflict in his mind—to do or not to do the mischief. "...Should I at your harmless innocence/Melt, as I doe?" Addison remarks "The conflict of passion is raised with a great deal of art." And Oliver Elton thinks that the "real tragedy" is being "played out in the breast of Satan." However short-lived, the usual conflict in the mind of a tragic hero before the fatal step is taken, is there in Satan and this definitely provides a dramatic element in an epic.

Not finding any personal cause to ruin the happiness of the innocent couple Satan ultimately falls back upon "public reasons". "So spake the Fiend, and with necessities/The Tyrant's plea, excus'd his devilish deeds." Here is a combination of Iago and Brutus. With his lustre visibly impaired Satan plays the role of a mean spy peering into the privacy of a couple and is gradually transformed to a toad and finally to a serpent. Satan's final defeat is where on returning from his great exploit he describes to his followers his feat but is received with a

"dismal universal hiss" instead of the loud applause which greeted his earlier speeches, as in Bk. I, for example : "He spake ; and, to confirm his words, out-flew / Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs/ Of mighty Cherubim ; the sudden blaze/Far round illumined Hell./ Highly they raged / Against the Highest" etc. Satan's fall is complete.

And Satan is not without a feeling of remorse for his lost glory. "Me miserable ! which way shall I fly ?" etc. is reminiscent of Macbeth's casting a pathetic look at his past and a sad review of his gain and loss in the fifth act of the tragedy—cf. "My way of life has fallen into the sear" etc.

May we not, therefore, conclude that there *is* drama in Milton's epic ?

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON MILTON'S POETIC LANGUAGE

AMALENDU BOSE

To the 1935 volume of the *Essays and Studies by the Members of the English Association*, T.S. Eliot contributed an essay entitled 'A Note on the Verse of John Milton'. In this essay, Eliot levelled certain charges—three, in the main—against Milton's poetic language :

- (i) That 'at no period is the visual imagination conspicuous in Milton's poetry' ; (p. 33)
- (ii) That 'Milton writes English like a dead language' ; (p.35)
- (iii) That 'Milton's poetry exercised a bad influence upon later English poetry' (p. 36) ;

In his later essays on Milton—in 1947 and 1950—Eliot reformulated his views mollifying the dogmatism and the harshness of his initial view ; nevertheless, the aspects of a theory of poetry from which the earlier views emanated still holds ground and deserves examination. In the later essays (especially in the Henriette Hertz Lecture of the British Academy, 1947) Eliot follows Johnson in dubbing Milton as a great poet ; Milton reminds him of Mallarmé and Joyce. As a Milton critic, Eliot speaks of 'my own interest in the poetry' (Essay I) ; presently, he speaks of 'two attitudes both of which are necessary and right to adopt in considering the work of any poet' ; he then elaborates this statement :

One is when we isolate him, when we try to understand the rules of his own game, adopt his own point of view : the other, perhaps less usual, is when we measure him by outside standards, most pertinently by the standards of language and of something called Poetry, in our own language and in the whole history of European literature. It is from the second point of view that we can go so far as to say that, although his work realizes superbly one important element in poetry, he may still be considered as having done damage to the English language from whence it has not wholly recovered.

In the second essay, Eliot differentiates between the scholar's role and the practitioner's role in the field of literary criticism and claims his own role to be the practitioner's. Accepting this differentiation, we should

concentrate only on *those implications of Eliot's Milton-criticism that overflow on to the nature of poetry in general*. Such implications are two : that a deficiency of the visual imagination indicates an impoverished imagination, and that 'Milton's style is not a *classic* style' in that it is not the elevation of a *common* style by the final touch of genius, to greatness. It is, from the foundation, and in every particular, a personal style, not based upon common speech, or common prose, or direct communication of meaning.' (Essay II) We have thus, in these essays of Eliot, a concept of the poetic imagination and a concept of the language of poetry. Even though Eliot's assessment of Milton was afterwards modified, the general concepts remain and call for some discussion, a discussion that should best be conducted (since the original charges were so conducted) with reference to Milton.

II

On the matter of Milton's deficient visual imagination, this is what Eliot has to say :

The most important fact about Milton, for my purpose, is his blindness. I do not mean that to go blind in middle life is itself enough to determine the whole nature of a man's poetry. Blindness must be considered in conjunction with Milton's personality and character, and the peculiar education that he received. It must also be considered in connexion with his devotion to, and expertness in, the art of music. Had Milton been a man of very keen senses—I mean of *all* the five senses—his blindness would not have mattered so much. But for a man whose sensuousness, such as it was, had been withered early by book-learning, and whose gifts were naturally aural, it mattered a great deal. It would seem, indeed, to have helped him to concentrate on what he could do best.

(p. 124)

Eliot clinches his point of view with a sentence : 'At no period is the visual imagination conspicuous in Milton's poetry.' To explain what he means by the visual imagination, he quotes from King Duncan's speech in *Macbeth* running 'This guest of summer,/The temple-haunting martlet does approve by his mansionery', and finally Eliot observes that such a passage 'conveys the feeling of being in a particular place at a particular time,' a feeling which Milton's word-pictures never give him.

Blindness was certainly a signally important event in Milton's life yet it is inexplicable why Eliot should attach so much importance to Milton's blindness in the context of the poet's imagery. It was not that

Milton was born blind or that he lost his eye-sight very early in life ; he went blind when he lived in a house in Petty France, Westminster, some time in 1651, when he was forty-three. As Edward Phillips says, 'his sight, what with his continued study, his being subject to the headache, and his perpetual tampering with physic to preserve it, had been decaying for above a dozen years before, and the sight of one [eye] for a long time clearly lost.' If Tennyson's short-sight and the Hindi poet Surdas's blindness and (according to tradition) Homer's blindness did not prevent them from building up visual imagery ; if even a very minor poet, the young Victorian Philip Bourke Marston, who lost his sight at the age of three and died at the age of thirty-seven, could write image-rich poetry that elicited the admiration of D. G. Rossetti, it is not possible to understand why Eliot should consider Milton's going blind in the fifth decade of life an obstacle to his creation of visual imagery. Yeats was tone-deaf, but the sonal value of his imagery is impeccable. Blindness, one may be permitted to believe, was at least partly responsible for the brooding, Introvert character of Milton's later poetry and, as any one who has read *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes* knows, Milton was harrowingly aware of his loss of sight. That Milton was a very learned poet is also an indubitable and universally known fact. but to say that blindness conspired with early book-reading to dry up the saps of Milton's poetic sensuousness is a frivolous attempt somehow to justify an untenable thesis. Milton's sense-perception (judging by his poetry) was preëminently aural and some of his finest imagery is sonal in character and effect, Yet that fact need not stand in the way of his employment of visual imagery. (In Tagore's poetry, at a rough estimate, the ratio between visual imagery and the auditory would be about three to one, and yet the loftiest achievement of Tagore's imagination is in the auditory imagery.) The preëminence and preponderance of auditory imagery in Milton does not prevent him from employing, employing with unrivalled mastery, visual imagery. When Eliot says that : 'at no period is the visual imagination conspicuous in Milton's poetry', one wonders if Eliot had ever noticed the following images, out of many :

'On the Morning of Christ's Nativity' :

And the yellow-skirted faves,

Fly after the night-steeds, leaving their Moon-lov'd maze.

'On Time'

the lazy leaden-stepping hours

(Cf. Leaden-eyed despair : Keats)

'L' Allegro'

And laughter holding both his sides

'L' Allegro'

the cock with lively din,
Scatters the rear of darkness thin ;
And to the stack of barn-door,
Stoutly struts his dames before ;

(Cf.

He looketh as it were a grym leoun,
And on his toos he rometh up and down—
Hym deigned nat to sette his foot to grounde.

(*The Nonne Preestes Tale*)

'Il Penseroso'

Till civil-suited Morn appear
While rocking winds are piping loud,
Or ushered with a shower still,
When the gust hath blown his fill,
Ending on the rustling leaves,
With minute drops from off the eaves.

Comus

Sabrina fair,
Listen where thou art sitting
Under the glassy, cooi, translucent wave,
In twisted braids of lilies knitting
The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair ;

'Lycidas'

Still morn went out with sandals grey.

These are from the early poetry offering evidences of a highly sensitive visual imagination when the poet was in his twenties. A sense of colour, hardly less rich than that of the Pre-Raphaelites, is proved by certain extracts culled almost at random.

Arcades

smooth-enameled green

Comus

dim darkness and this leavy labyrinth

Paradise Lost

Who forthwith from the glittering staff unfurled
The imperial ensign ; which, full advanced,
Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind,
With gems and golden lustre rich emblazed,
Seraphic arms and trophies ;

(P. L. I, 535-30-39)

Milton's visual imagination shows itself at its concentrated impeccability in epithets, single and compound :

Lycidas : Sleek Panope
beaked promontory

Comus : dimpled brook
(The epithet became Hopkins 's favourite.)

Paradise Lost

Book IV : damasked with flowers (1. 334)

Book VIII : powdered with stars (1. 581)

V : Sky-tinctured grain (1. 285)

„ We brush mellifluous dew and find the ground

„ Covered with pearly grain (429-30)
(N. B. *mellifluous* in the sense of *mellisonant*.)

IV : vegetable gold (1. 220)

„ shaggy hill (1. 224)

„ crisped brooks (1. 237)

„ the flowery lap/Of some irriguous valley (11. 254-55 ;
quoted in Shorter O. E. D.)

„ Nectarine fruits which the compliant bough/yeilded them
(332-33)

VII : aery caravan (428)

VIII : liquid lapse of murmuring (263)

It should be borne in mind that quite a few epithets used by Milton were so often repeated and misused by Milton-imitators in later times that they lost the freshness and evocative power they had when they were employed by Milton and, what is sadder still, today's readers may approach Milton's employment of these epithets with the benumbed sensibility of a later period. If a poet is to be held responsible for the critic's distorted sensibility and perspective, no reader of times later than the writer's own would ever enjoy the writer ; in our times, we have seen how numerous verbal patterns of T. S. Eliot's poetry have been repeated *ad nauseam* by the countless admirer-imitators of the poet. While Eliot levelled his third charge against Milton ('Milton's poetry exercised a bad influence upon later English poetry'), he did not foresee the nature of his own influence on his imitators nor perhaps did he remember the dehydrating and constrictive influence of Shakespeare on nineteenth century attempts at verse drama. In the reading of poetry, there are two parties : the poet and the reader. Whether a theme or a verbal structure is dead or animated depends not only on the writer's creative talent but on the reader's recreating receptivity as well.

Eliot remarked on what he considered to be Milton's deficiency in the visual imagination. The Milton-student remembers in this connexion some lines from *Paradise Lost*, VIII :

imagination, always under control, endows the more than human figures in *Paradise Lost* with a solidity of contour. About Milton's angels, Stopford Brooke says that they are the angels of a painter. Indeed the angelic host in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, Michael, Raphael, Uriel and Abdiel in particular, possess the firmness of physical personality of such sculptured figures as the bust of Julius Caesar (48 B. C.), the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius (161-180 A. D.) and the Head of the Emperor Caracalla (3rd c. A. D.) and such figures of a later century as Donatello's David (c. 1430) and Andrea del Verocchio's Colleoni (1496) or the pictorial colourfulness and muscularity of the figures in Nicolas Poussin's early work, *The Rape of the Sabine Women* (before 1637). In an essay included in the *Seventeenth Century Studies Presented To Sir Herbert Grierson*, Professor Mario Praz comments on the similar artistic developments of Milton and Nicolas Poussin. Even as Milton moves from a delight in concrete, sensuously experienced objects to a concentrated joy in virtue in the abstract, Poussin leaves the luscious beauty of his early pictures to the severe piety of his later works. [As an Indian student of English poetry, I cannot help drawing a parallel with Rabindranath Tagore's emergence from the ornamental imagery of his earlier poetry to the bare and severe imagery of the later : I have discussed this matter in my Bengali work *Sahitya Lok, The World of Letters*, 31-32, 87-99.] The Milton-student must not overlook the fact that the whole course of the poet's life and art moves towards a gradually intenser absorption in the pure flame of piety. This explains the pruning in his later poetry of all embroidery. The Imagination unaffected by blindness at forty-three, has not ceased to be pictorial ; only the pictures have now acquired a severe simplicity and bleakness of character.

Of elaborate pictures in Milton, there are numerous instances. Who can fail to be impressed by the Leviathan-like, horizontal stretch of the Arch-Fiend on the burning lake (Bk. I) and the comparable picture in *P. L.* VII ? :

there Leviathan

Hugest of living Creatures, on the Deep
Stretcht like a Promontorie sleeps or swimmes,
And seems a moving Land, and at his Gilles

Draws in, and at his Trunck spouts out a Sea. (412-16)

Or, one remembers, the profound description of Hell in Bk. II, comparable to the descriptions of Hell in the *Aeneid* and the *Inferno*—Hell, the 'dismal world' through which flow the rivers Styx, Acheron, Cocytus and Phlegeton, while, far off from these, 'a slow and silent stream, / Lethe the River of Oblivion routes / Her watrie Labyrinth, whereof who drinks, / Forthwith his former state and being forgets, / Forgets both joy and

grief, pleasure and pain; Hell, the region where harpy-footed Furies led by Medusa of Gorgonian terror guard the Ford ; the region full of 'rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens and shades of death.' One cannot but remember the description in the same book of the incestuous horrors of Sin, Satan's daughter, a description that beats the record of the bizarre fancy of the allegorical poets of the fifteenth century and even of Spenser. Then we have the unforgettable pictures in the same book of Chaos into whose 'wild abyss the wary Fiend / Stood on the brink of Hell and looked a while'. One remembers the motion picture of Eve's appearance before Satan in Book IX :

Eve separate he spies,
Veil'd in a Cloud of Fragrance, where she stood,
Half spi'd, so thick the Roses bushing round
About her glowd, oft stooping to support
Each flour of slender stalk, whose head though gay
Carnation, Purple Azure, or spect with Gold,
Hung drooping unsustained, them she upstaies
Gently with Mirtle band, mindless the while,
Herself, though fairest unsupported Flour (424-32)

And the epic ends with the matchless picture of Adam and Eve trudging towards the Earth :

They hand in hand with wandring steps and slow.
Through Eden took their solitarie way.

Every unmotivated reader of poetry finds these word-pictures very great. They are characterised by what Courthope calls Milton's 'dim intimations' and Saintsbury describes as 'Miltonic vagueness'. Perhaps following them, Eliot maintains that Milton's pictures do not 'convey the feeling of being in a particular time and place'. This lack of particularity Eliot insensitively regards as evidence of the poet's deficient visual imagination. Now, if particularly be the sole criterion of the visual imagination, many of Milton's pictures will admittedly not pass the standard. And not Milton's alone. The descriptive passages of many other poets too will have to join the company of the plucked—the poets of the *Divina Commedia* and the *Faust*, lesser but eminent poets as Blake (*The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*), Shelley (*Prometheus Unbound*), Hardy (*The Dynasts*), Auden (*The Ascent of F 6*) and Kalidasa (*Kumara Sambhava*). The vagueness of Milton's picture of Heaven, Hell and Eden is of the essence of imaginative idealisation and to speak of 'particularity' in this context is as absurd as to attribute to these regions longitude-and-latitude specifications. The ideality of space and time in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* is absolutely demanded by the exigencies of the plot of the epic. Milton's is a cosmic

drama far far transcending the geography and history of this earth ; any particularity attached to this drama must needs be related to an earthly counterpart and would thus inevitably produce conceptually as well as aesthetically an incongruous effect. The 'vagueness' of Milton's cosmic pictures, far from proving or even suggesting any deficient and stultified imagination, proves, on the contrary, the matchless dynamics and versatility of Milton's imagination which dares travel across astronomic distances and dimensions carrying the reader's mind behind its imperious trail. It is a 'vagueness' that enables the reader imaginatively to experience a universe that is beyond the perception of man's sense-organs. Milton's creative imagination is superior to some carping criticism levelled against him.

III

Eliot's second charge against Milton goes thus :

His language is, if one may use the term without disparagement, *artificial* and *conventional*. Milton writes English like a dead language. The criticism has been made with regard to his involved syntax. But a tortuous style, when its peculiarity is aimed at precision (as with Henry James), is not necessarily a dead one ; only when the complication is dictated by a demand of verbal music, instead of by any demand of sense. [Here Eliot quotes Satan's address in Book II beginning 'Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers'] ...The dark angel here is not thinking or conversing, but making a speech carefully prepared for him ; and the arrangement is for the sake of musical value, not for the significance...The result with Milton is, in one sense of the word, *rhetoric*. That term is not intended to be derogatory. This kind of rhetoric is not necessarily bad in itself, though likely to be bad in its influence ; and it may be considered bad in relation to the historical life of a language as a whole. I have said elsewhere that the living English which was Shakespeare's became split up into two components one of which was exploited by Milton and the other by Dryden. Of the two...Dryden's development was the healthier, because it was Dryden who preserved...the tradition of conversational language in poetry.

The central objection of Eliot is to rhetoric. Milton he says, employs rhetoric for the sake of musical value; not for significance. This is an assertion that is based on the stupefying presumption that music can be (or perhaps is) based on meaninglessness. In spite of T. S. Eliot, there is no music that is meaningless just as there is no poetry'

no sculpture, no painting, no work of art (no matter what the medium of the art is) that is meaningless. It is possible to have a conglomeration of sounds that convey no meaning, a jumble of colours that convey no meaning, brick and stone and mortars that convey no meaning, physical movements that convey no meaning, but when the sounds and colours and stones and movements become music and poetry, painting and sculpture and dance, when they become works of art, they must needs be meaningful; the art is in the marriage of medium and meaning. An extreme example of poetry that is a melodious flow of words gyrating round virtually the same logical content can be found in Swinburne; but even there the aesthetic validity of the verbal whirlpool lies rather in the evocation of a mood—the evocation being the meaning—than in semantic exactitude of a direct statement. But such is not the aesthetic objective of Milton with whom poetry means a perfect consonance of meaning and melody. Consider the opening paragraph of *Paradise Lost*:

Of Mans First Disobedience, and the Fruit
Of that Forbidden Tree...

...
... my adventurous Song,

That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above th' *Aonian* Mount, while it pursues

Things unattempted yet in prose or Rhime. (11. 1-16)

The paragraph is certainly involved, structurally tortuous. The involution is *required* by (what Milton might have thought to be) the unparalleled solemnity and supra-human nobility of the theme of his epic, a solemnity and nobility that must be musically integrated into the traditional invocation. But is the logical content, the meaning of the substance, sacrificed or subordinated to the sound? We have 26 pentameter lines in the Invocation and 2 sentences, the first closing at line 16. There are two principal clauses in the first sentence and the address of the imperative first clause comes as late as in the sixth line ('Sing, Heavenly Muse'), the multiple objective clauses having gone before. The inversions straightaway postulate the theme and its tributary consequences and the reader is taken through *every one* of these clauses to a series of fresh happenings: Man's first disobedience; Man's fall; the introduction of death into the world; the loss of Eden; the eventual rise of the Saviour. The theme having been stated, the poet now invokes the Heavenly Muse. Who is this Heavenly Muse? Milton is writing an epic but he is a Puritan writing an epic in a manner that must not deviate from Puritanic beliefs and sensibilities; the Power that he invokes is the divine Power authenticated by the Bible. It is the Heavenly Muse who on the secret top of Horeb or of Sinai inspired Moses to teach the Israelites how the heavens

and earth had risen out of Chaos. Or perhaps the Heavenly Muse prefers to reside on Sion's hill by Siloa's brook which flows fast by Solomon's Temple (called the Oracle in I Kings vi, 19-20). Writing his ambitious poem in the form of the classical epic, Milton at this point suggests a parallel between Siloa's brook and the spring close by Zeus's altar on Mount Helicon, the favourite haunt of the Hellenic Muses. Having thus suggested his affiliation with the ancient epic, Milton at once proceeds to suggest further that his is a loftier subject than the subjects of the ancient epic, deriving its inspiration from the Holy Spirit rather than from the pagan Muses. And so he states his aim as a flight above the Aonian Mount in its pursuit of 'Things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhime'. From line 17 to the end of the Invocation, line 26, we have the purest prayer for Divine Inspiration that we have in the English language.

There is nothing here that is not stringently required by the logical marshalling of the poet's ideas. Music and meaning have merged into a seamless unity. The inverted syntax at the beginning—putting the genitive object at the beginning and delaying the predicate—produces the effect of an imaginative suspense; the reader expectantly waits for the predicate and when he finds it, realises its importance in the grammatical structure and logical course. Milton's stylistic variations—inversion, omission of subordinate parts of speech, apposition, occasional injections of Latin syntax and vocabulary (a common feature of seventeenth century literary style represented at its best in Bacon and Browne, Donne of *The Progress of the Soul* and George Herbert)—are all radiant indexes to the subtle variations of the poetic mood. The sonority of Milton's blank verse is not simply a matter of assonance or juxtaposition of dignified vowels (cf. 'what in me is dark/Illumine, what is low raise and support'); nor is it mainly a product of a shifting of the caesura or of unorthodox substitutions of the iambic foot by the trochee, spondee or the pyrrhic. The sonority is deeply embedded in the rhetoric, and the rhetoric is no mere composition-to-rule superimposition on the logical or the tonal content. Rhetoric logic, groundtone, word-pictures, all fuse into a magnificent harmony in Milton's poetry. The involution of Milton's sentences is the product of the combined forces of melodic necessity and intellectual exactitude. Eliot prefers an involved passage of Henry James to one of Milton's on the ground that the former *strains after precision* [italics mine] while the latter depends mainly on sound-effect. Never was a left-handed compliment more slyly given. To say that one's straining after precision leads to an involvedness of syntax is tantamount to saying that one cannot say clearly what one wants to say. Milton's artistic and intellectual abilities elevated him above any supposed virtue of 'straining after

precision' since precision was the normal cast of his thinking and expression.

Milton's syntactical involutions, it should be appreciated, arise from an organisational necessity. A considerable part of *Paradise Lost* consists of speeches which are orations, e.g., the orations of Satan, Beelzebub, Moloch Belial and Mammon before the council of the fallen angels in Books I, II, and VI; the dialectical expositions of God in the council of Heaven in Books III and IX; the lengthy speeches of Adam and Eve (not oratorical but lyrical in character) in Books IV, V, IX and X; the narrative speeches of Raphael in Book VI. Oration is a highly rhetorical and elevated form of utterance that has flourished in certain societies—in Athens and Rome, in the Long Parliament, in France before and during the French Revolution, in the England of Burke and Sheridan, in Hitler's Germany, in the India of Gandhi's times. Rhetoric grew into an organised grammar of speech in the hands of Aristotle, and became a very important academic discipline in the Western world, pervading the Christian Church (e.g., St. Philip Neri's *oratorio*). Milton's *Areopagitica* is an undelivered oration and Milton belonged to the seventeenth century, a lofty period of oration in England, especially pulpit oration, the period of Donne and Tillotson, of Pym and Jeremy Taylor. In the context of the age, in the context of the 'plot' of the poem that required far more discussions than action, the reader has to expect a frequent occurrence of speeches in the poem and, because of speeches, rhetorical devices. To denigrate Milton's epics, then, on the ground of their employment of rhetorical devices is to betray one's insensitiveness to their artistic objective and method. Syntactical involution is embedded in and integral to the pattern of these epics.

And not orations alone. The involution of syntax marks most other prose works of the age. Consider the meandering, periodic sentences of Sir Walter Raleigh, Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* (and the speeches in *New Atlantis*), Sir William Temple's writings; consider the 'marmoreal' rhythm of the fifth chapter of Browne's *Urn Burial*. And this prose is qualitatively not different from the verse of its own age or from the prose and verse of the preceding generation. When Mr Eliot says that 'the living English which was Shakespeare's became split up into two components one of which was exploited by Milton and the other by Dryden', he indulges in a speculative bifurcation that is neither historical nor natural. Linguistically, Elizabethan English was not a diarchy; it was as monarchical as the political authority of the country at the time was. What Mr Eliot calls two components was rather a unity of many trends, as many as you can have in any aspect of a seething, surging, fast-moving

national culture. Shakespeare does not have two styles but twenty if you please, or more, the unifying stamps of the age and of the creative energy of the author being behind all of these styles in a manner that makes all of them Elizabethan English. Bully Bottom's English and the English of King Henry IV, the English of Launcelot Gobbo and that of Prince Hamlet, the English of Prospero and that of Caliban share the same generic characteristics. And linguistically, English did not split up into two or more styles after Shakespeare although certainly it acquired new nuances and features and lost or found weakened some earlier features. For English writers between Queen Elizabeth and the Restoration, there was no pronounced dissociation between the naturalistic style and the elevated. Donne, for instance, is equally at home in the naturalistic style (e.g., *The Canonization* or prose writings, 'The Character of a Scot at the First Sight' and 'The True Character of a Dunce') and the elevated style (e. g., *The Progress of the Soul* or prose writings, Sermons LXVI and LXXX). By temperament no less than by his classical training, was Milton incapable of the levity of a Rochester or a Suckling and, of course, there is no room for this levity within the plot of *Paradise Lost*. One is reminded in this connexion of Matthew Arnold's observations :

The present age makes great claims upon us : we owe it service, it will not be satisfied without our admiration. I know not how it is, but their commerce with the ancients appears to me to produce, in those who constantly practise it, a steadying and composing effect upon their judgment. not of literary works only, but of men and events in general. They are like persons who have had a very weighty and impressive experience : they are more truly than others under the empire of facts, and *more independent of the language current among those they live.*

(Italics mine : Preface to *Poems*, 1853 edn.) His lack conversational limpidity may be one of Milton's limitations as his lack of humour certainly is, but also certainly, these limitations do not invalidate his characteristic style. Mr Eliot finds it artificial. You can call it artificial only in the sense that W. B. Yeats describes the Byzantine mosaic and his own poetry as 'the artifice of eternity'. There is no poetry without rhetoric of some kind at some level. Purely linguistically, there is no difference between the lines of Johnson and the other lines quoted below :

If the man who turnips cries
Cry not when his father dies,
'Tis a proof that he had rather
Have a turnip than his father.

(Donne : The Legacy)

When I died last, and Dear, I die
As often as from thee I go,
Though it be but an hour ago,
And lover's hours be but full of eternity,
I can remember yet, that I
Something did say, and something did bestow.

(Pope : Epistle to Arbuthnot)

Shut, shut the door, good John ! fatigu'd, I said.
Tie up the knocker, say I'm sick, I'm dead.
The Dog-Star rages I nay 'tis past a doubt,
All Bedlam, or Parnassus, is let out ;
Fire in each eye, and papers in each hand,
They rave, recite, and madden round the land.

(Masefield : The Widow in the Bye Street)

Mostly she made her bread by hemming shrouds
For one rich undertaker in the High Street,
Who used to pray that folks might die in crowds
And that their friends might pay to let them lie sweet ;
And when one died the widow in the Bye Street
Stitched night and day to give the worm his dole.
The dead were better dressed than that poor soul.

(Eliot : Rhapsody on a Windy Night)

Half-past one,
The street-lamp sputtered,
The street-lamp muttered,
The street-lamp said 'Regard that woman
Who hesitates toward you in the light of the door
Which opens on her like a grin',
You see the border of her dress
Is torn and stained with sand,
And you see the corner of her eye
Twists like a crooked pin.

All these lines, Johnson's included, belong to the same tribe, lexically and structurally, and yet while the other extracts are poetry, Johnson's lines are not. All the extracts come under the family of *langue* (to adopt the tripartite classification of Ferdinand Saussure) ; within that family, each passage (Johnson's included, inasmuch as it shows a characteristic knack of sarcasm) testifies to *parole* ; and once we are beyond that border-line, all the extracts, except the Johnson-passages, reveal what Saussure has called *idiolect*. In these passages, the individual writer's capacity for going beyond the generic and social features

of language comes out in his aptitude for impressing a quality on the language, a quality that is based on rhetoric. When Donne says 'I die as often as from thee I go' ; when Pope writes 'Fire in each eye...they rave, recite' ; when Masfield says that the widow in the Bye Street stitched night and day to give the worm his dole ; when Eliot brings before us the woman the corner of whose eye twists like a crooked pin, we have rhetoric and poetry, we have language elevated from the common-placeness of its social-dialectal use to the radiance of a unique use. 'Great literature', says Ezra Pound in *How to Read*, 'is simply language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree'. The meaning, I submit, is not confined to its intellectual circle ; the meaning radiates in multiple directions of intellect, emotion, imagination and so on. Walter de la Mare too, in *Poetry in Prose*, speaks of 'the complex, though not the complicated, nature of poetry' ; this complexity consists in a unique interplay between thought and expression so that the author's meaning as expressed in the poem is an apotheosis of the bare meaning when that meaning is extracted and dissociated from the poetic form. 'Words alone are certain good', says Yeats. Rhetoric is the device whereby words, benumbed by their humdrum common use, are galvanised into infinite suggestiveness and individuality so as to attain their certain goodness. The Sanskrit rhetorician Kuntaka maintains that poetic speech is an extraordinary deviation from the mode of common speech. Mr Eliot's disapproval of Milton's rhetorical style is thus invalid as a specific criticism of Milton's poetical language, is, further invalid as a general theory of the language of poetry, and is finally denied by his own use of language.

HERRICK'S LYRICAL POETRY

KALYAN K. CHATTERJEE

I

Living the life of a recluse, first as an elderly undergraduate at Cambridge and then for the rest of his life as Vicar of Dean Prior, Devonshire, Herrick sought compensation in poetry and played in it the games that he probably did not in real life. His classical education and taste, which in those days was apt to give suckle to an exaggerated pagan creed and led inevitably to a love of women, wine, and bawdy language, polished him out of the society of his homely parishioners. His reaction to his Devonshire posting is well-known, (but the forced withdrawal from the society of the city wits gave him the opportunity to remain occupied with his pen) :

More discontent's I never had
 Since I was born, then here
Where I have been, and still am sad,
 In this dull Devonshire :
Yet justly too I must confesse :
 I ne'er invented such
Ennobled numbers for the Presse
 Then where I loath'd so much.

Confronted with very little but his own creativity, he discovered that the realistic situations of life, personal feelings, moods, fleeting thoughts and fancies of daily life, and private and social occasions were all good enough for lyric poetry, which could thus be brought to the daily levels of life. In making this discovery he was certainly influenced by the favourite classics of the school of Ben, namely, Horace, Catullus, Martial, and Anacreon, all of whom showed that the lyric impulse could be husbanded and domesticated. He was too committed a classicist to dispense with imitations and echoes, and too submissive in opinion and controversy to explore a North-West passage of his own. He was a traditionalist and clung to the tradition of lyric, as he understood it, with a zest peculiarly early seventeenth-century.

What would have been his life and poetry if he could have a career in London and gained the attention of the courtly circle? Would he have been a prototype of the throng of the pleasure-loving and debauching poets of Charles II's court though he was infinitely more gifted than any

of these ? It is probably idle to speculate on such questions. Only during the transitional years of the Restoration could a king debauch around with his band of wild courtiers with impunity. Though Herrick lived the last fourteen years of his life under the restored monarchy and won back his vicarage as a reward for his having been a Royalist, neither his name nor his verses were heard at the Court. In fact his age completely overlooked him. One reason may be the fact that the *Hesperides* and *His Noble Numbers* were published (1648) at the height of the Puritan Revolution, and afterwards, the Frenchified court of Charles II changed literary tastes too radically. One of the literary conventions neglected was the lyric itself, in which the Renaissance expressed so much of its fine rapture. There was a definite swing towards narrative poetry with an intellectualised content.

Herrick himself had begun to live in a world of imagination and make-believe. As the scion of a wealthy goldsmith family in London he felt caught up in the conflicting vortex of class politics, but solved the problem by being loyal to the king and by retiring from London society. He hated action and the contemporary life. Entering Cambridge too late, he stayed there for twelve years, slowly absorbing the new humanist atmosphere of that campus. Poetry to him was to be a certain good, and it gave him a world to live in. It is to be suspected that the world he lived in was peopled with shadowy beings proceeding from the teeming ideas of his brain rather than from reality. The Julias, Antheas, Saphos, and Electras were part of a mystifying game, though one can never be sure if these, or at least, some of these, did not represent real women. But the names all came from classical poetry, and even if some of these women were real people to whom the poet made real love, they were viewed in the images of their counterparts in that poetry. But the fact that Herrick could compose an epitaph on Prudence Baldwin, his maid servant, some years before that lady actually died, goes to prove that he could imagine non-existent situations. He wrote of himself : 'Jocond his Muse was, but his Life was chaste.' So much for the question of fiction and fact in his poetry.

II

Professor L. C. Knights's remark that Carew represented 'culture self-conscious and on the defensive' is also particularly true of Herrick. Knights quotes the following from one of Carew's lyrics in support of his argument :

But let us, that in myrtle bowers sit
Under secure shades, use the benefit
Of peace and plenty, which the blessed hand

Of our good king gives this obdurate land ;
Let us of revels sing.

(*Scrutiny*, XIII, 50-51)

Besides the historical fact that the Renaissance lyric came to its mellow fruitfulness in Caroline poetry, the point to note is that this poetry marked the self-awareness of the age. From Spenser onwards the ruling sovereign became a part of the poetic world. It was however not so much royalism for its own sake as the belief that the humanist culture thriving in the matrix of the Tudor and Stuart monarchies was becoming a passing phase that led the Caroline lyrists to take a defensive position. The songs and revels, the cakes and ale were being threatened by an opposing social order bringing melancholy and a stern virtue in its train. Lyrical poetry embodied too vital a part of Renaissance humanism and the courtier cult not to feel threatened at the prospect of the middle class Roundheads coming at the helm. While poets like Donne and Fulke Greville worried about the new philosophy calling everything in doubt, Herrick secluded himself to his dream of gathering rosebuds while he could. As the school of Ben struck its roots deeper into Augustan Rome, Herrick scattered his pagan sentiments to him as long as the livelong day would last. These enchantments were as fresh as the dewdrops on the brink of the breaking of the day. Another bemused poet trying to describe the spirit of the times had written :

When Spenser was buried in Westminster Abbey many poets read verses in his praise, and then threw their verses and the pens that had written them into his tomb. Like him, they belonged, for all the moral zeal that was gathering like a London fog, to that indolent, demonstrative Merry England that was about to pass away. Men still wept when they were moved, still dressed themselves in joyous colours, and spoke with many gestures. Thoughts and qualities sometimes come to their perfect expression when they are about to pass away, and Merry England was dying in plays, and in poems, and in strange adventurous men.

(Yeats, *Selected Criticism*, ed. A. N. Jeffares, London, 1964, p. 106)

Herrick spent a lifetime in carousing to the light love of the courtly tradition, because he knew it was coming to an end.

Leavis, much concerned with the question of poetic idiom, suggested a line of approach for the Caroline poets side by side with the Metaphysicals : 'In considering the idiomatic quality of the Caroline lyric, its close relation to the spoken language, we do not find it easy to separate Donne's influence from Jonson's. And in considering Jonson's classicism, we cannot easily separate it from his idiomatic quality.' (*Scrutiny*, IV, 242). As regards continuing the tradition of Ben and finding for

himself a distinguished place in that tradition, Herrick's achievement was indeed very great. But under the influence of Eliot, all praise for Marvell ('tough reasonableness beneath the slight lyric grace,' and all) and of the poetry of intellectualised content, Leavis found Herrick 'trivial' and 'overrated.' (ib. 254).

'Trivial' Herrick was, and we should add naughty, crude, and risqué, but how can that be a final judgment on a poet's excellence? Since it was Herrick's aim to bring poetry to bear on daily life, even its inconsequentiality and not the opposite, the charge of triviality, is an irrelevant argument in considering his excellence in the poetic idiom of the seventeenth century. Actually, Herrick provides the necessary relief to the general propensity of the English lyric to be high-stung and serious. He showed how one could keep a diary in lyric and write a biography in rhythm. But even more important a point than that, he domesticated a poetic mode as completely as Eliot himself had wanted to do with regard to the blank verse of his poetic drama.

Herrick was slangy, perverse, and sometimes scatological in his language, but never pretentious. His diction is not cut from the heavy brocade of the Elizabethan poetic rhetoric, but indisputably shows the maturation of the classically allusive, the pastoral, and the festive, which are the distinctive characteristics of Renaissance poetry in general. He had, of course, the advantage of learning from Ben Jonson, whose lyrical wand melted away much of the verbal tumour affecting Elizabethan poetry. Spenser, Marlowe, and Shakespeare withstood the tide of classical rhetoric and imitation and their greatly creative genius imposed on them the order of their own minds. But Jonson beat out a lyrical line, true to the kindred points of classical humanism and home, giving glorious sustenance to a whole generation of university educated poets. In fact the avid study and imitation of the Greek and Latin poets in the Renaissance schools bore their maturest fruits in the Caroline lyric. Jonson's lapidary art was an ideal to cherish. He must have exhorted his 'sons' on the same virtues of imitation, exercise, and finish that he vindicated in his critical writings. He gave an interpretation of 'imitation' that was congenial to an era of humanist poetics: 'To be able to convert the substance or riches of another poet to his own use. To make choice of one excellent man above the rest and so to follow him till he grow very *hæ*, or so like him as the copy may be mistaken for the principal' (*Discoveries*). Jonson also said that 'the poet is the nearest borderer upon the orator, and expresseth all his virtues, though he be tied to numbers' (*Discoveries*). Yet *hæ*, more than any other contemporary figure, was responsible for the final separation between 'eloquentia' and poetic idiom in the seventeenth

century English lyric. He upheld the Latin Augustan poets as models of imitation and fought against the rhetorical lyric of the Elizabethan era. In *Timber* is recorded his concern for a simpler and purer language for poetry: 'Pure and neat language I love, yet plain and customary.' The chief virtue of style is perspicuity.' One of his lyrics, which was in fact a translation from the Latin of Bonnefonius (Jean Bonnefons), has this artistic ideal to preach:

Give me a look, give me a face,
That makes simplicity a grace;
Robes loosely flowing, hair as free;
Such sweet neglect more taketh me
Than all the adulteries of art:
They strike mine eyes, but not mine heart.

From such ideals of the poetic *sprezzatura* flowed the easy grace and spontaneity of the Caroline lyrists. In the matter of naturalness and in the liquid spontaneity of poetic speech Herrick even surpassed his master. The seasoned mellowness of lyrical utterance seemed to have come to him by one bound, and once he found it he stuck with it, varying it now and then, but always musical with light touches. He also knew how to cast his classical lore lightly around, or even to conceal it behind the limpid flow of a lyric colloquy. It must be conceded however that Herrick's reading of the classics was rather specialised. Spenser solemnised his paganism by Platonism. But Herrick was deliberately unsolemn. Nor did he want to be intense, as he himself warned:

In sober mornings, doe not thou rehearse
The holy incantation of a verse.
But when that men have both well drunke and fed
Let my Enchantments then be sung, or read.
(‘When he would have his verses read,’)

In lyric poetry Herrick's peculiar artistic aim was to replace the incantatory and the momentous with the momentary and festive. He would not invoke the imagination but evoke moods. A slight touch of intoxication, an often loose tongue, albeit kept within the bounds of Cavalier badinage gave to his poetry that touch of moody indulgence and flighty wit that are the hallmark of the Caroline attitude to life. It was not merely a poetry to keep a drunken chivalry awake; its aesthetic appeal roves back like a rose over the waves of time.

Herrick wrote within a tradition that was essentially imitative with standards of excellence observed to a refinement. This tradition allowed exquisiteness but withheld poetic greatness. It was responsible for his perfect lyrical line and not infrequently a charming ingenuity of

phrase ('liquefaction of her clothes', 'the tempestuous petticoat', 'fresh-quilted colours,' 'circummortal purity, [said of Julia's breasts], 'pure seed-pearl of Infant dew,' etc). His lyrical powers, doubtlessly supreme among his contemporaries (unlike Leavis, Edmund Gosse put him above Carew, and Gosse is right), brought him back to popularity with the Romantic poets, and Swinburne, characteristically ignoring his bawdy language and sensuality, showered superlatives on him and praised him as the greatest song-writer of England 'as surely as Shakespeare is the greatest dramatist' (*Studies in Prose and Poetry*, 1895, p. 45). But even without Romantic exaggerations (actually Swinburne may not be exaggerating at all), Herrick has an irresistible passage to our hearts. The qualities of his poetry have a peculiar appeal for our time noted for its *sang-froid*, irony, wit, and a subdued emotion shirking tension and elaborate structure in expression.

Yet Herrick's poetry has also the charm of a deeply felt but bygone era; it is the poetry of twilight, shining through the mist of a greatly creative period coming to a close. Stylistically as well as thematically, Caroline poetry was an artful lament over the bygone and the transient, the drooping and the dying. The Cavalier poets' very attitude to life, that is, making poetry a surrogate for experience and enjoyment, was a defeatist attitude. 'What distinguishes the Cavalier usage,' says Earl Miner, 'from that of other styles is the concern over the good life, both its acquisition and its loss. To the extent that Time pitted himself against the happy life, one might take such measures as seizing the day, making much of time, enjoying freely. And yet, especially in the love poems urging such courses, the valiant effort to enjoy seems doomed' (*The Cavalier Mode from Jonson to Cotton*, 1971, p. 105). Herrick himself never wrote anything to suggest that he believed in anything except a lively attitude to enjoy. His poems often contradict each other and on love itself, the most recurrent subject of his poetry, his speech varies from *carpe diem*, to cynicism to utter disbelief.

III

Herrick's and his fellow Cavalier poets' lack of commitment to moral and philosophical issues and their hedonism have been the most patent cause of stricture from Milton onwards (*PL*, Bk. IX). A comparison of Herrick's with Milton's lyric art may be worth our while. Milton's shorter lyrics are inspired by the same literary culture as Herrick's poetry. but the difference between the two points to two of the main directions that the seventeenth century lyric took, one simple, fluid, and colloquial, the other complex and orchestral. The Milton of 'L' Allegro' and 'Il Penseroso' was capable of pouring his soul into lyrical evocation of

moods, yet those two happy raptures of the epic poet with all their rich allusive texture and deep pattern of the line can serve as a measure of difference between the two schools of lyrical poetry. The difference between Milton's lyrics and epic poetry is that between the sonata and symphony of the same composer. But Herrick throws orchestration to the winds and plucks his lyrical line on a string delicate and yet sinewy. This delicate music clusters around familiar images of flowers, colours, and jewels; rosebuds, daffodils, primroses laced by morning dew, and other flowers and petals of spring; lips red as cherries and teeth white as pearls. These common images, evoked by a simple yet lively nature hedonism, swirl through the brief lyrics of the *Hesperides* and open a wispy window to a time long gone by and yet retaining a hold on the memory. Over the glimpse of flowers and flesh and the lingering blush of his idealised mistresses there rains a misty yearning that to many human beings is the chief attraction of an old song or the cherished dream of a departing age.

There is indeed a great deal of the yearning, the lingering, and the departing in Herrick's poetry. It seems to be forever trying to catch the emotion of the fading and the falling, the dying and shortlived. The emotion aroused however is not morbid: frequently allusive to the evanescence of beauty and loveliness, it aims at developing a cool, but nevertheless ironic rationale for a poetic Epicureanism. Personally he was acutely aware of time fleeting away quickly and the moment of enjoyment changing too soon. That is why in 'The Argument of his Book' he said: 'I sing of Times trans-shifting.'

Appropriately enough, Herrick's poetry is often trying to catch reflections and essences. The Julia poems are the most characteristic of this style. The exquisite little lyric on the liquefaction of Julia's clothes is too famous to quote, but it is worth pointing out here that the Julia poems, larger in number than those to other women, have a characteristic of their own. In these the poet expresses his attachment for her not so much by a lyrical inventory of anatomical details, as he is won't to do with regard to the others, as by some transcendent touch to his worship for her physical beauty. Julia must be loved for her exhalations and essences, for example, her breath 'circumfused' with the spices of the world, her silvery voice melting melodious words to lutes of amber; on her cheek claret and cream commingle, and her lips are rays of coral. She is loved by her tokens and signets, her clothes and ornaments. Once or twice only he takes more liberty with Julia as in 'Julia's Fall,' where his Cavalier wit slyly drops the hint that 'the wanton Ambler chanc'd to see/Part of her leggs sinceritie.' (Herrick was an unabashed voyeur). When he actually becomes anatomical in

respect of Julia, he manages to express his wonder and ecstasy by some spiritualising attributes. That little jewel like poem, 'Upon Julia's Breasts' crystallises around 'that circummortal purity.' Julia's kiss transfused into his lips, would be treasured as an embalming relic. When Julia unlaces, it is not so much the sight that he comments on, but the scent that 'fills both Heaven and Earth with it.' Whoever this Julia was, she gave rise to some of the most memorable dreams of beauty. Here is one ripple of this dream :

Dew sate on Julia's haire,
 And spangled too,
 Like leaves that laden are
 With trembling Dew
 Or glitter'd to my sight,
 As when the Beames
 Have their reflected light
 Daunc'd by the Streames.
 ('Upon Julia's haire fill'd with Dew')

Here is another :

THE TRANSFIGURATION

Immortal clothing I put on,
 So soone as Julia I am gon
 To mine eternall Mansion.

Thou, thou art here, to humane sight
 Cloth'd all with incorrupted light
 But yet how admirably bright.

Wilt thou appear, when thou art set
 In thy refulgent Thronelet,
 That shin'st thus in thy counterfeit ?

There is no doubt that there are to be found in his works dozens of trivial poems, and some quite scabrous, but it is possible to find many gems, and some very great ones, like 'Gather ye Rosebuds While ye May,' 'Corinna's Going a-Maying,' 'To Daffodills,' 'The Mad Maid's Song' and at least half a dozen others. To 'Delight in Disorder,' 'The Rock of Rubies,' 'Upon Julia's Clothes,' 'Upon Prew His Maid,' it would be difficult to match more exquisite poems in the language. The same is true of the many humourous fourliners that he wrote on various folks.

IV

From Herrick's poetry itself, it is possible to get a clear picture of the poetic ideal he set before himself. Though the first twenty five

years of his life ran parallel to Shakespeare's entire writing career, he chose Jonson as his ideal poet, whom he regarded as the best of poets ('Upon Ben. Johnson'). In another tribute to Jonson ('An Ode to him'), he reveals the qualities that he prized in the elder poet and the lyrical atmosphere of the taverns and the society he presided over: 'those Lyrick Feasts/ Made at the Sun,/ The Dog, and the triple Tunne.' It was a setting characteristically Elizabethan, but also reminiscent of the social atmosphere of Augustan poetry:

Where we such clusters had,
As made us nobly wild, not mad ;
And yet each verse of thine
Out-did the meate, out-did the frolick wine.

In these lines is reflected the Renaissance view of the poetic inspiration ('nobly wild, not mad'), but in the next stanza is expressed the Jonsonian faith that the poetic furore must be disciplined by art:

.. send to us
Thy wits great over-plus
But teach us yet,
Wisely to husband it.

('An Ode for him')

These lines point out Herrick's self-awareness as an artist-with an ethos different from the Elizabethans'. He did not tune his lyric to any heightened key and consciously eschewed great themes, passions, and images. Aesthetically as well as artistically he was against excess and admonitions against it are scattered around in his poems such as the following:

THE HONEY-COMBE

If thou hast found an honie-combe
Eate thou not all, but taste on some
For if thou eat'st it to excess ;
That sweetness turned to Loathsomeness.
Taste it to Temper ; then 'twill be
Marrow and Manna upto thee.

Herrick cultivated this unwillingness to plunder the honey-combe, the rich quarry of the Elizabethan poetic rhetoric, almost to a fault, as shown, for example, by the following epitaph on a theme that usually made the Elizabethan poets more eloquent and figurative:

TO A FRIEND

Looke in my Book, and herein see,
Life endlesse sign'd to thee and me,
We o're the tombes, and Fates shall flye ;
While other generations dye.

The rhythm is faultless, but somewhat tame. The images melt into abstraction, and there is no pursuit after a blazing metaphor. The final line is too quiet. Unwilling to go to the depths of tragic emotion of the intensity of comic satire, Herrick does not soar far above the ground ; he refused to be 'nobly wild', or 'file abroad to seeke for woe' (*To his Muse*,). Therefore, giving a new twist to the pastoral argument, he makes a stay-at-home plea with his Muse :

Whither Mad maiden wilt thou roame ?
Farre safer 'twere to stay at home
Where thou mayst sit, and piping please
The poore and private Cottages...
That man's unwise will search for Ill,
And may prevent it, sitting still.

(*'To his Muse'*).

Yet Herrick certainly did not mean to write poetry of silent meditations. In sober moirings his poetry would not come to offer holy hush. His enchantments would work in an atmosphere moderately sensual : men have drunken and eaten well, the hearth throws a smiling wave of warmth upto the ceiling, and then it would be the time for his kind of songs ; or when the orgies of Bacchus flee at the approach of the gentle pastoral note, 'when the Rose raignes, and locks with ointments shine.' In such an atmosphere even a 'rigid Cato' would mellow a little to read his lines ('When he would have his verses read'). It is clear that Herrick intended his poetry to be read to the accompaniment of a mood and an atmosphere. In a way he was a party-maker, a glorified MC.

Elizabethan poetry, born in imitation and rhetoric, retained nonetheless an importance of theme, of moral tone and philosophy. This is true even of Jonson, the acclaimed father of the Cavalier poets. Lovelace, one of the most representative figures of the Cavalier mode, did not refrain from uttering noble sentiments ; he is in fact remembered chiefly by his two lyrics expressing noble determination in the face of adversity. But Herrick did not have any need for ideas, for moral sentence. Lyricising to his heart's content was the one great passion of his life. It is not accurate to say that he replaced life by art, but it is evident that he could find in almost any datum of his life and experience grist for his lyrical mill. One can almost say that in him the craftsman took a revenge on the philosopher. His poetry showed that an Arcadia could still be fashioned by the new luxuriating rhythm of English and this Arcadia could be made more appealing by the circumstantialities of the life really lived by the poet. (However, as Edmund Gosse warned, 'the deceptive air of reality which clothes the landscapes of Herrick should, by analogy, make his biographers careful in accepting

too exactly all that he says about himself' (*English Poets*, ed. T. H. Ward, 1880, II, 128),

The secret of Herrick's appeal is that he does not give the impression of straining after effects. He rejects rhythms, conceits, and metaphors that are heavy, opaque, or in any way a drag on the reader's imagination. His versification is light and language liquid. And because he realised that he has not given to his poem sustenance of any deep idea or thought, he knows that he has to be quick, brief and bright. His language had to be radiant, but also have the hard edge of the stones that had to be inlaid in an artwork. Herrick must have seen his six-liners and two-stanza lengths falling into an anthology like well-cut jewels in a bracelet, balanced by medium length and longer lyrics, of which he wrote quite many. No matter how earthy and bawdy he was he does not seem to be bawdier than Shakespeare in some of his sonnets with their *double entendre*, his good taste has acted as a preservative to his poems, neglected in his own day.

Herrick went farther than any other poet of his time in divorcing poetry from both idealism and rhetoric, the chief bequest of classical humanism to poetry. On the side of disadvantage, as an extreme case, one may cite his Epithalamies, for example, those on Sir Thomas Southwell and his Lady and Sir Clipsbey Grew and his Lady, and contrast their harsh frankness about nuptial rites and their pagan atmosphere of earthiness with the idealistic tone and graceful imagery of Spenser's 'Epithalamion'. But on the side of advantage, one can point to the welcome absence of artificial poses and dated idealism, of pretentious and peculiar tastes. Compared to his immediate predecessors, for example, Beaumont and Fletcher and Ford, Herrick is unmistakable for his human realism. He replaced the quaint romanticism of these sentimentalists with his concrete expression and stood face to face with his reader and listener with the particularity of personal emotion. His wit, his humour, and his cavalier insouciance add their sparkle to make him one of the most companionable of English poets.

Note : Quotations from Herrick's poems in this article are from L. C. Martin's edition, *The Poems of Robert Herrick* (1965).

BOOK-REVIEWS

Shakespeare Appreciations. P.K. Guha, Jadavpur University, Calcutta, 1974.

This 190-page long collection of eleven essays on several aspects of Shakespeare's mind and art, came out of the press just about a week before the distinguished octogenarian scholar breathed his last. Professor Guha author of several studies in drama, including a book entitled *Tragic Relief* which, after its publication in the early thirties, had been widely acclaimed as a powerful work of scholarship and criticism, was known and admired all over the country as a stimulating teacher of English literature.

The central thesis of these essays has been postulated in the first essay, 'Shakespeare, the Poet of Acceptance'. Ranging over the whole gamut of Shakespeare's works, Professor Guha clinches his thesis in several sentences :

The ultimate note that these so-called Dark Comedies strike is the cheering note of tolerance and acceptance and not the saddening note of vexation or despair. (p.14)

Thus 'sweet are the uses of adversity', the motto of the Duke, the hero of *As You Like It*, the most typical of Shakespeare's comedies, is also applicable to his tragedies. And by this device Shakespeare achieves in his tragedies 'a subjugation of the essential task awful', of the tragic dramatist, according to Nietzsche. (p.16)

... ..

Shakespeare was all of one piece. The plays of all the stages and types indicate the same attitude to life, which may be summed up by the single word 'Acceptance'—manifesting itself, as we have seen, in Tolerance, Reclamation, Redemption, and Restoration in the successive stages of his dramatic work. (p.20)

Reading these pages, I have been reminded of certain relevant and comparable statements of Rabindranath Tagore :

He who creates, creates his own self in many forms. He can turn himself into Rama, at other times into Ravana ; at times into Hamlet, and again into Macbeth, and can thus express a variety of natures in unison with variations of situation. (Centenary ed. of Complete works, xii, 599 ; my translation.)

Shakespeare nourished his *dramatis personae* within his own life.

sucked them in the mother's milk of his own inmost genius, and then they grew as men and women. Otherwise they would have become mere treatises, not human beings. Therefore, in one sense, Shakespeare's writings are a kind of self-expression ...(*ibid.*, xiii, 841-42 ; my translation.)

It is quite possible to differ from the belief that Tagore enunciates and Professor Guha consolidates as his thesis. For myself, Shakespeare's artistic ego must be differentiated from his social ego, Shakespeare the man and Shakespeare the chameleon-like dramatist must not be identified. It is also possible to discover in Professor Guha's thesis an excess of assertions and a lack of analytical examination of the texts, but, on the other hand, these assertions are those of a scholar who, after over half a century's constant study and meditation, is now engaged (as an advocate is engaged) in a final summing up rather than in an extensive dissertation. Professor Guha's thesis reveals to us Shakespeare's personality as much as his own.

In Praise of Learning: John Colet and Literary Humanism in Education. Kalyan Chatterjee, Affiliated East-West Press, New Delhi, 1974.

This book is based on a doctoral dissertation. Dr. Chatterjee's subject is quite unorthodox. He has chosen to work on an author about whom students of literature (not all of them in this country) read in some history of literature but about whose impact on English literature, direct or remote, they have very dim notions. And that dimness is not, at a first glance unjustifiable. As Dr. Chatterjee's Bibliography shows, John Colet's (1467 ?—1519) writings were not composed with any literary intent; his works include theological pieces, sermons, some letters, some statements connected with the new education with which he was concerned. John Colet is not then a figure in the literary pantheon. Yet, Colet's was a valuable contribution to the Humanism of the sixteenth century. Dr. Chatterjee very rightly says in the preface: 'The hazy notions conveyed by the term "humanism" acquire substance when we become acquainted with the pioneer humanist John Colet..' Dr. Chatterjee touches upon the Platonic trend in fifteenth century thinking and the gradual displacement of the distrust of literature (one remembers Chaucer's penitent abjuration of literature at the end of the *Parson's Tale* of the *Canterbury Tales*: 'Wherefore I biseke yow mekely for the mercy of god, that ye preye for me, that Crist have mercy on me and foryeve me my giltes :/—and namely, of my translations and endytinges

of worldly vanities, the which I revoke in my retracciouns :/as is the book of Troilus ; The book also of Fame"...) by a belief in the positive and beneficial part that good literature can play in the build-up of a truly Christian personality.

Along with this central theme, there are acute observations on the Humanist conception of Nature. The concept of Nature that John Danby traced in *King Lear* (in his *Shakespeare's Doctrine of Nature*) began much earlier than Hooker and Bacon, began indeed with Colet, Fisher and Erasmus, flowed on throughout Shakespeare's works (*As You Like It* and *The Tempest* are outstanding documents in this context) and Spenser and *Comus* until towards the end of the seventeenth century, the new scientific thinking substantially modified medieval remnants. Dr. Chatterjee has presented a competent study of the important foundation stone laid down by Dean John Colet for the towering achievement of the art and life of the English Renaissance.

Studies in Tennyson As Poet of Science. Kalika Ranjan Chatterjee, S. Chand & Co., New Delhi, 1974.

This monograph of 128 pages plus a few pages of a select but useful bibliography, is a part of a doctoral thesis that Dr. K. R. Chatterjee of the department of English of Bihar University had presented several years ago. Dr. Chatterjee examines in this book the impact or the concept of Evolution on nineteenth century English poetry. This is a vast subject and can grow vaster still if a scholar were to include in his conspectus fiction, literary theory and criticism, drama, the personal essay and other varieties of writing too. The theory of Evolution does not constitute the whole territory of science but it certainly occupies an important segment of that territory, a segment which cast a profound influence on Western thought, including religion and art. The representative character of Tennyson's poetry is proved, if it needs any fresh proof at all, by his unflagging response to the theory of Evolution. Critical works on this subject are not too many, the important works being, Beach's *The Concept of Nature in Nineteenth Century English Poetry*, Buckley's *The Victorian Temper*, Ifor Evans's *Literature and Science*, Aldous Huxley's *Literature and Science*, and Lionel Stevenson's *Darwin Among the Poets*. Dr. Chatterjee has however succeeded in spotlighting a number of issues unnoticed by these distinguished writers and has thus added substantially to our understanding and appreciation of Victorian poetry in general and Tennyson's poetry specifically. This is a notable addition to Indian Studies in English literature.

A. Bose

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